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October 2004

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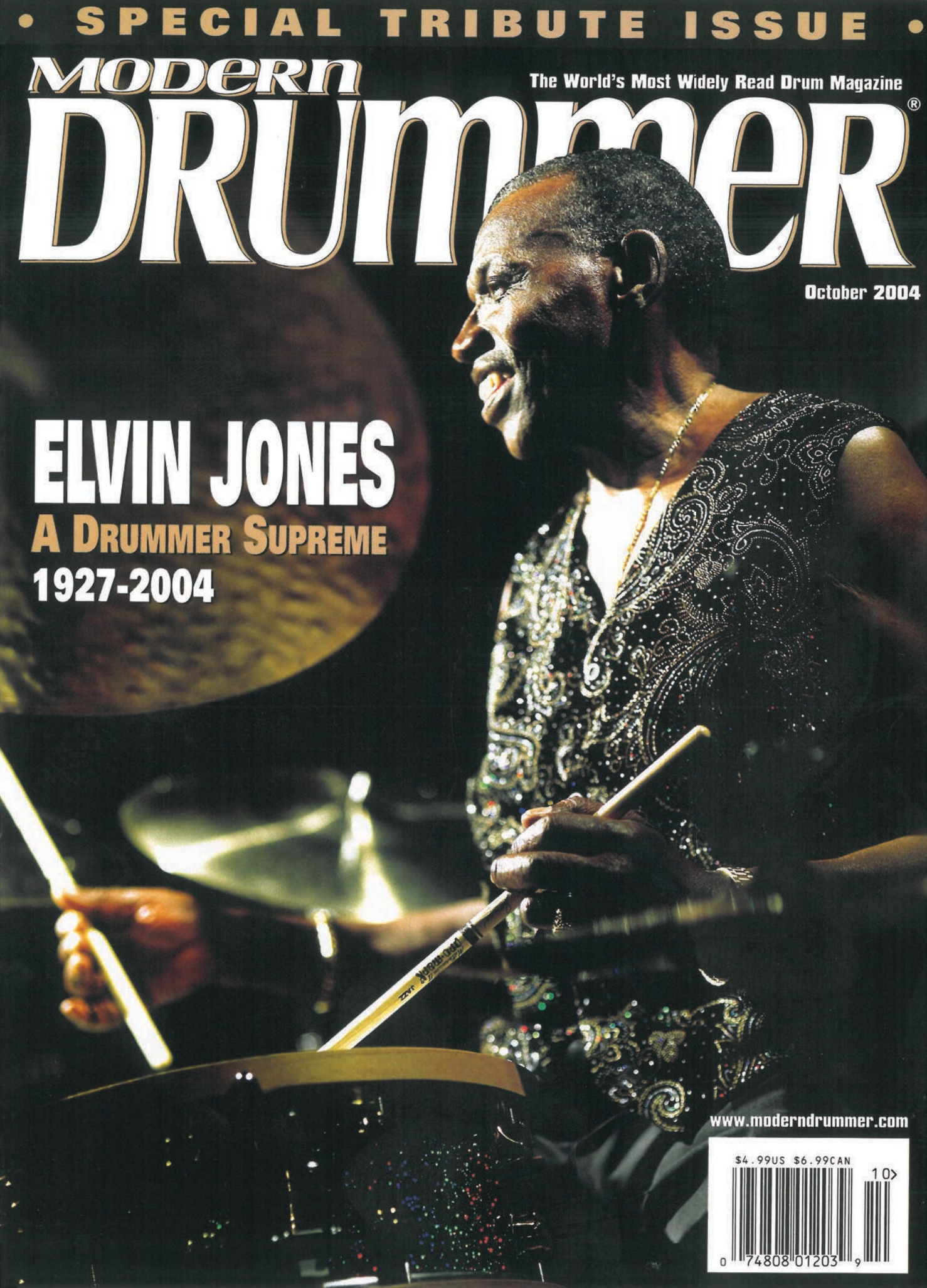

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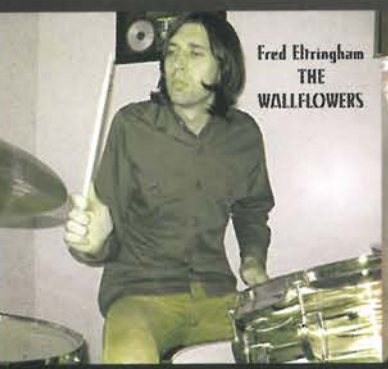

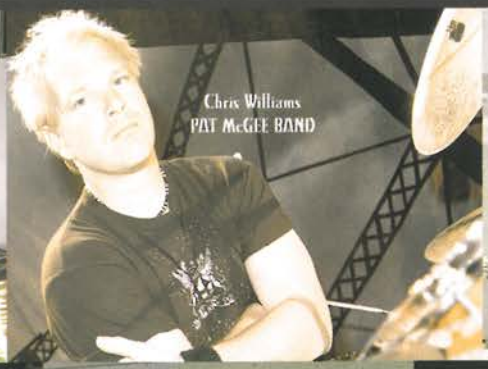

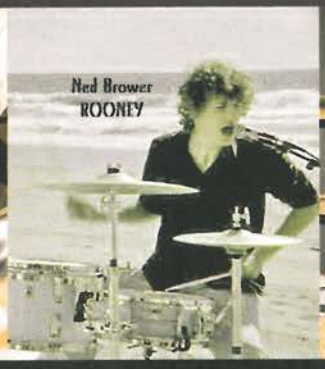

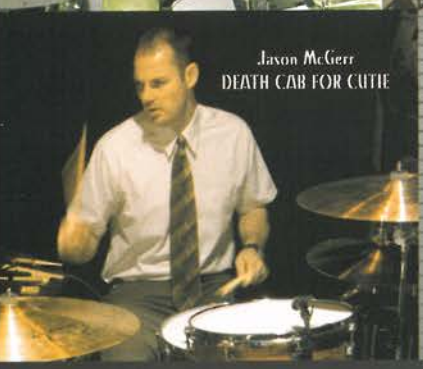

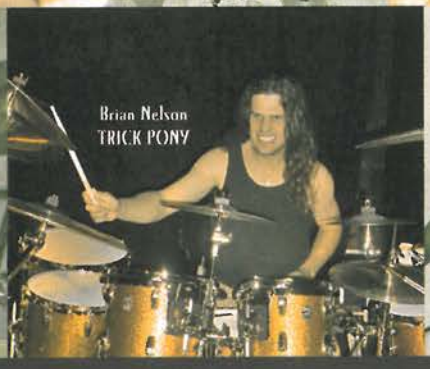

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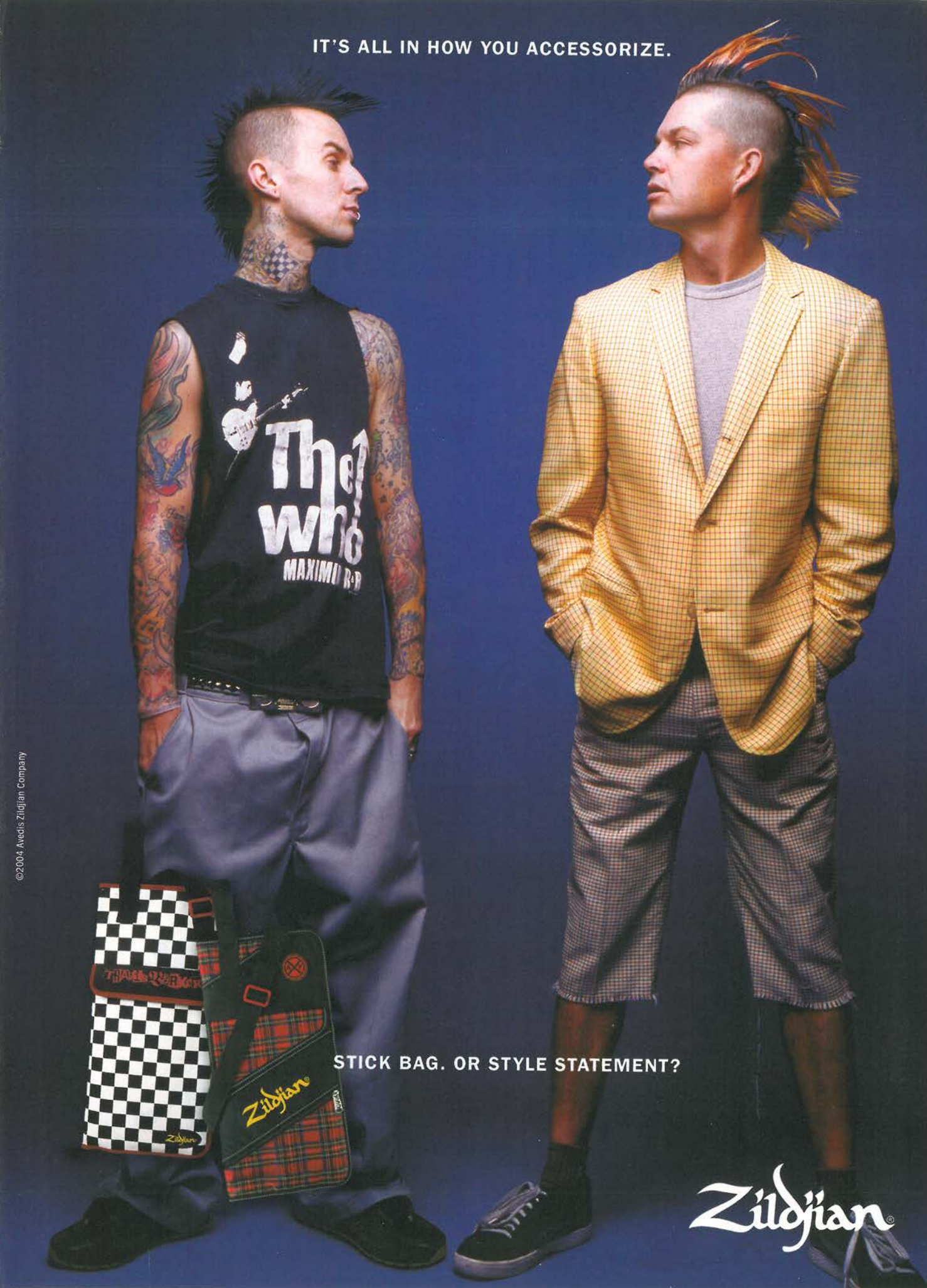
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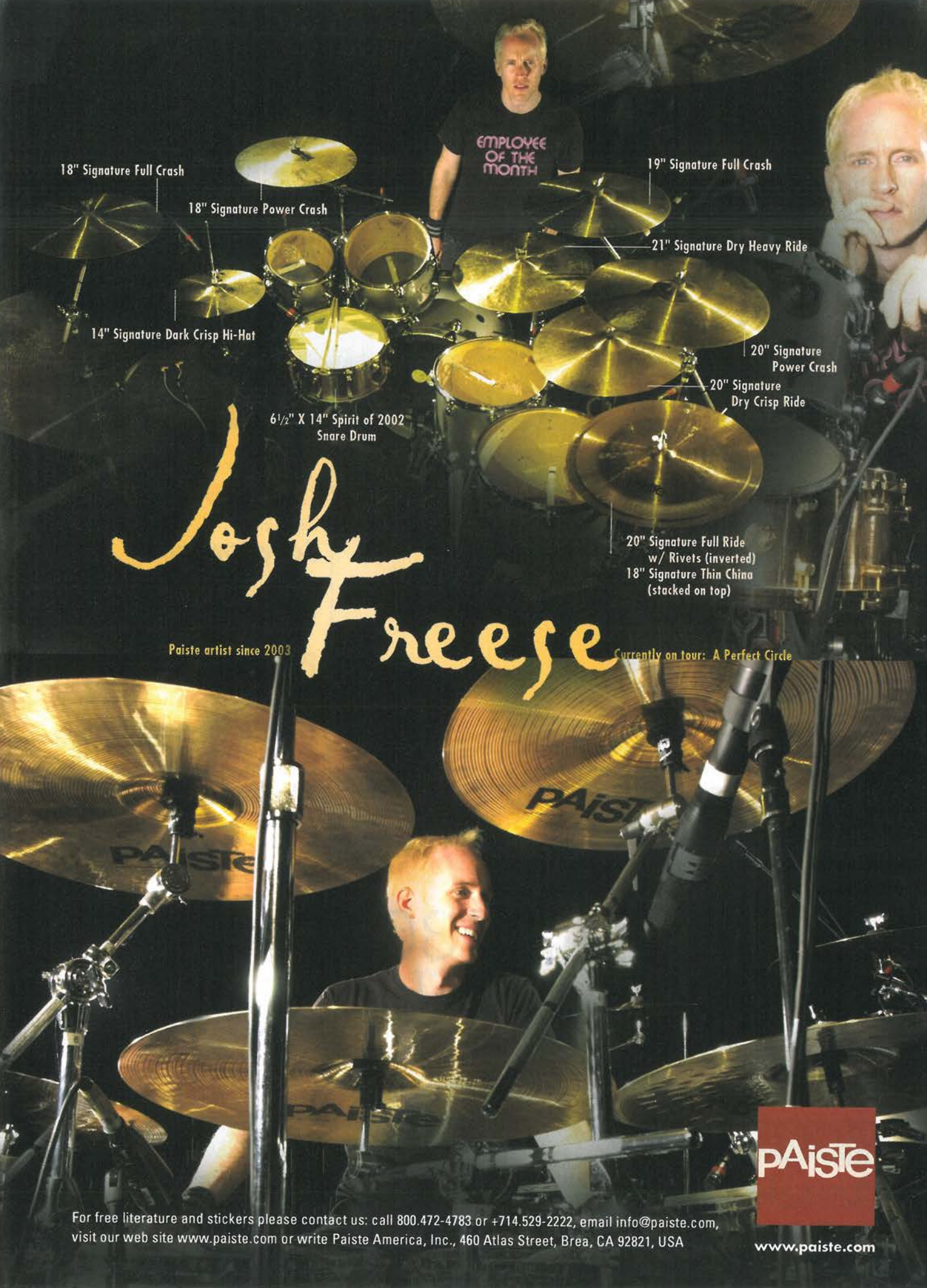
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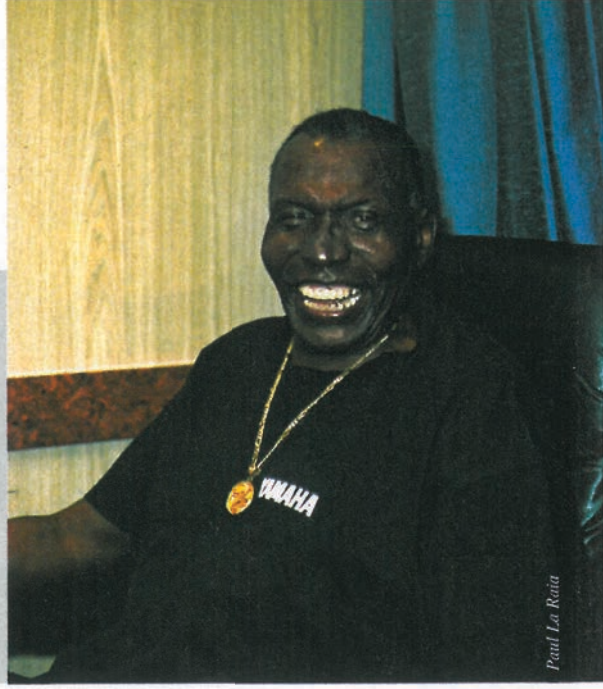

Paul La Raia

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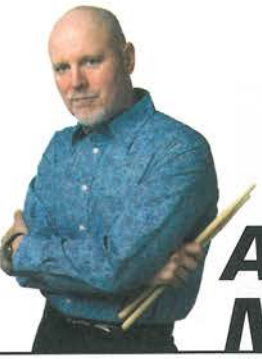
AN **EDITOR'S** OVERVIEW



A Force Of Nature...At Rest

"We're human beings; we falter, we slip, we stumble, we stutter. But we can also sing as clear as a bird, and that's very beautiful." So said the late, great Elvin Jones in a *Modern Drummer* interview in 1982. By his passing he's shown us just how human he really was, even though Elvin was *super*-human to fans of jazz drumming.

Elvin Ray Jones passed away on May 18th. It's hard to believe that a man of such huge spirit, presence, and gusto is gone. I feel so lucky to have met Mr. Jones and to have seen him perform on several occasions. And, of course, like a lot of drummers, I've spent *hours* spellbound listening to his recordings. With Elvin, it was about so much more than the notes. He somehow went deeper with his drumming, reaching into the universe and taking listeners to intense, uncharted places. No one who heard him will *ever* forget the experience.

***

One week after Elvin's passing, a memorial service was held in New York City. It seemed as if every great jazz musician on the scene was on hand to pay his or her respects. Legendary drummers Max Roach and Roy Haynes, both lifelong friends of Elvin, were in attendance. The many family members, friends, and former bandmates who spoke revealed quite a bit about Elvin Jones, the man. And when a Dixieland band started rumbling through the house—led by none other than Wynton Marsalis—the emotions ran high.

***

This issue of *Modern Drummer* is dedicated to Elvin. In it you'll find several pieces about him. Besides in-depth analysis of his playing, we've also tried to give an overview of his amazing life.

I'd like to thank writers Rick Mattingly and Ken Micallef, drummer John Riley, and all of the artists who shared their thoughts of Elvin for helping us put together this tribute. I also want to thank Michael Shrieve, who graciously gave us an excerpt from a book of Elvin's memoirs he's been working on. It's a fascinating read, in the drummer's own words.

Finally, I want to express our sincere condolences to Elvin's wife, Keiko, his family, and his friends. We've lost one of the true masters of the instrument, but his incredible spirit will live on in our hearts forever.

Bill Miller

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Dave Grohl

It's great to see Dave Grohl where he belongs: back on the drums, and on the cover of *MD*. As a major inspiration for me and many drummers I know, Dave has been sorely missed behind the skins. Thanks for bringing his rediscovered drumming attitude to the forefront. **Tom Frielander**

Dave King And Andrea Centazzo

Kudos for the articles on Dave King and Andrea Centazzo in your July issue. These guys are pursuing music and percussion to wherever it takes them. No one goes into music to make their first million, but many do compromise their dreams in the name of commercial success. Dave and Andrea are following their bliss into uncharted territories. Great reading. **Christopher Brown**

Susie Ibarra

Thanks for the July update on Susie Ibarra's current projects. Whatever and with whomever she plays, Susie's virtuosity and creativity have inspired me for years. I've always been amazed that so little has been written about her. It's heartening to see such an impressive musician get some of the attention she so obviously deserves. **Steve Leto**

Kudos From Chris

Billy Amendola's *Editor's Overview* about friends in the June issue was great. John Riley's warm-up exercises in that same issue are terrific and extremely productive for me.

In the July issue, Billy Amendola's interview with Ralph MacDonald was also great, as was Billy Ward's article about Andy Hess. And Isabel Spagnardi's *Overview* was a beautiful thank-you note to all the hard-working people at *Modern Drummer*. You all deserve it, and I'm sure Ron would be very happy.

Thanks for two superb, useful, and informative issues. **Christopher Parker**

Editor's note: Chris Parker is a noted studio and touring drummer whose credits include the Saturday Night Live band, Stuff (with Steve Gadd), and hundreds of recording projects.

Let There Be Drums

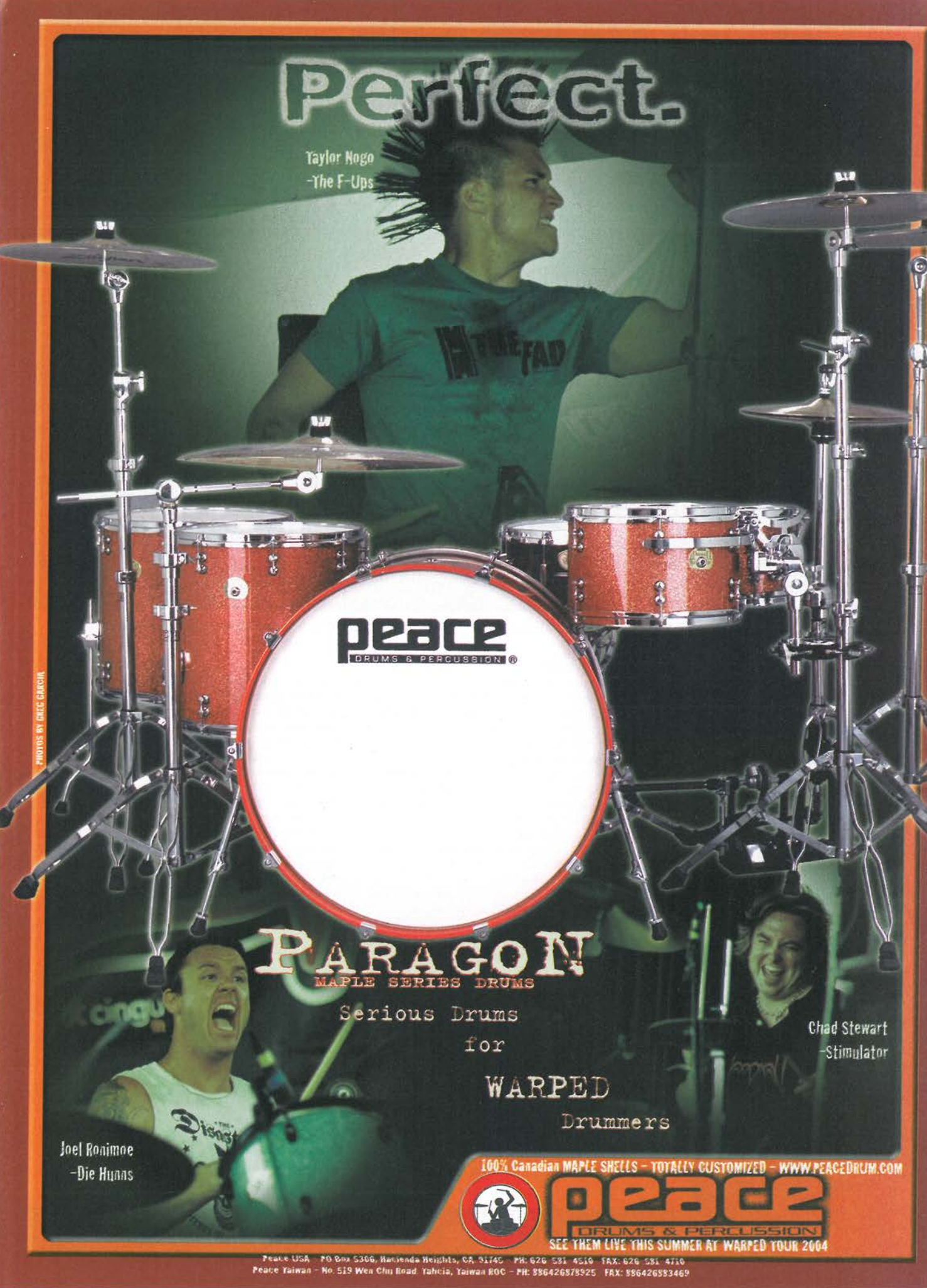
Thank you so much for Jim Duffy's article "Let There Be Drums! Top-15 Drum Performances of The 1960s" in the July '04 issue. I grew up listening to, and being inspired to play by, the songs and drummers you mentioned—along with many others of that golden era. Nearly forty years later, those songs and those drummers are still powerful enough to cause both admiration and inspiration. **Joel Stovall**

The Drummer In Iraq

I've been the drummer in New Horizon—the rock band out of the USAF Band Of Liberty—since February 1, 2002. Along with my fellow musicians, I'm part of the first Air Force Band to deploy into a major theater of operations. We recently traveled and gigged in such Iraqi cities as Kirkuk, Balad, Tallil, and Baghdad, playing for 5,000 troops in nine days.

In Baghdad my gear had to survive 35-mph wind gusts (one blew half of my kit off the stage) and a 45-minute sandstorm. In Balad, the base came under attack by mortar fire during our performance. Everybody, including us, donned flak vests and helmets. But as they say in show business, "The show must go on!" We played for two and a half hours straight, until the "all clear" was given. During that time I performed a ten-minute drum solo, ending with the famous Dennis Chambers double bass lick/hand crossover. I received a standing ovation for my efforts, which was very gratifying.

Bennett Weidemann, SrA, USAF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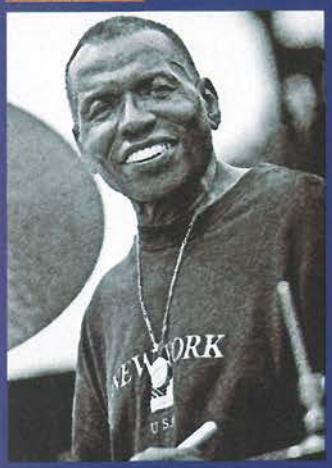
Readers' Platform

Elvin Jones



"Listening to Elvin Jones play drums was like listening to the Sermon On The Mount"

Elvin Jones' passing is a staggering loss to the world of drumming, and to jazz itself. No one influenced more modern jazz drummers than Elvin. Once any drummer heard him, they knew they wanted to get to the place he was at. But try as we all might, we couldn't—because Elvin's music was not about notes or technique. He was drumming from the depths of his soul, and no book or teacher could get us there. We could only sit back, listen, and be inspired.

A former teacher of mine once said that listening to Elvin Jones play drums was like listening to the Sermon On The Mount. Anyone who saw Elvin live—and witnessed his intensity, his sophistication, his power, his gentleness, his sweat, his swing—heard his sermon. Just as the scholars of history have studied that first sermon over the ages, so too will the scholars of jazz study Elvin Jones' work. He is truly unforgettable and irreplaceable. **Pat Calabrese**

Much can be said for those contemporary drummers whose dedication to their craft has been persistent. But, in reality, all of our enthusiasm and inspiration is really based in tradition. For me, it started years ago when I first heard The John Coltrane Quartet, with the relentless driving polyrhythms of Elvin Jones. That combination served to make this ensemble one of the most important in jazz history. I was further influenced by Elvin's thunderous solo in the 1970 movie *Zachariah*.

How many "modern" drummers will have Elvin's longevity and commitment? How many will have such a record of excellence that they become idols for generations to come? **Sorrell B. Katz**

I met Elvin Jones once. I arrived a little early at the club where he was playing, and I couldn't resist the temptation to sneak backstage. Elvin's dressing room door was open. He was in there relaxing, surrounded by family and friends. I craned my neck, trying to catch a glimpse of greatness. Then I came to my senses and realized that, as a complete stranger, I was intruding. But as I turned to leave, Elvin approached me. In a voice as distinctive as his groove, he said, "So...do you play drums?"

I laughed. Every human being in that club that night played drums. And every one of them aspired to play drums like Elvin Jones.

We spent the next few minutes talking about drums and jazz. When I left, Elvin wished me luck and extended his hand. It was as if every ounce of experience and beauty he had behind the drumset physically manifested itself in that enormous hand. And like every drummer who shook hands with Elvin Jones, I hoped that through some sort of osmosis, his inimitable touch had rubbed off.

When I reflect upon that evening, what I cherish most about Elvin is not his rolling triplets or his intense circular rhythms, but that he left the warmth of his family and friends, and with the simplest of questions, compassionately welcomed a stranger into his life. And although I only met him that once, Elvin seemed like the kind of guy who would want drummers to celebrate his life, and to celebrate our lives through playing.

Yes, Mr. Jones, I do play drums.

Gerry Porter

From the first time I heard "Equinox" to his last appearance here in Boston, Elvin Jones was an inspiration to me—not only to play the drums, but to live. I will always remember the smile, the sweat, the bombast, the beauty, and the power of his playing. But, most of all, I will remember the spirit he brought to all the music he played and to the world we live in.

Phil Neighbors

Editor's note: Elvin's passing moved several MD *readers to compose poetry in his memory. Here are two examples.*

Elvin Ray 1927-2004

Indianapolis, summer jazz fest 2000.
Jones in his 70s, hot day, me hugging the stage.
A frail cat with a million-dollar smile climbs behind the drumset like an African king ascending the throne.
He's playing with young cats.
It's afternoon, picnic-style seating.
He seems too old to wail, but wail he does. Such syncopation!
Rolling fills, offbeat staccato, behind the beat, around the beat, under it, through it, defying gravity, toying with tempo—crackle sway roll cymbal crash!
Smile bursting but struggling, too.
At one point, an old foot cramps up, stops playing bass drum altogether, arms soldiering on.
It is a thing of beauty watching him.
A lifetime spent in the driver's seat, doing time behind Coltrane and Miles, Parker and Ellington and Mingus.
I saw Buddy Rich in his prime back in the late '60s: a powerhouse display of mesmerizing mastery and explosive command.
But Elvin, he just dishes it out like an ice cream vendor, having fun, working it, but working, too.
You can feel his joy, his pain, his intensity, his smack-dab outta-time in-time thwackery.
Cadence pulse stroke pound splash!
Skeletal elemental elegance.
Life magazine called him "the world's greatest rhythmic drummer."
"He's happy. No more suffering," said Keiko Jones, wife of thirty-eight years. "He's been fighting for so long."
Ah, the sweet darshan sitting so close to one so close to God's heartbeat, so loose, so superfluid, even for a brief afternoon set, even so late in the game.
Rest well, elastic innovator of the golden wrists.
Swing low, sweet chariot.
Saint Peter's truly in heaven now.

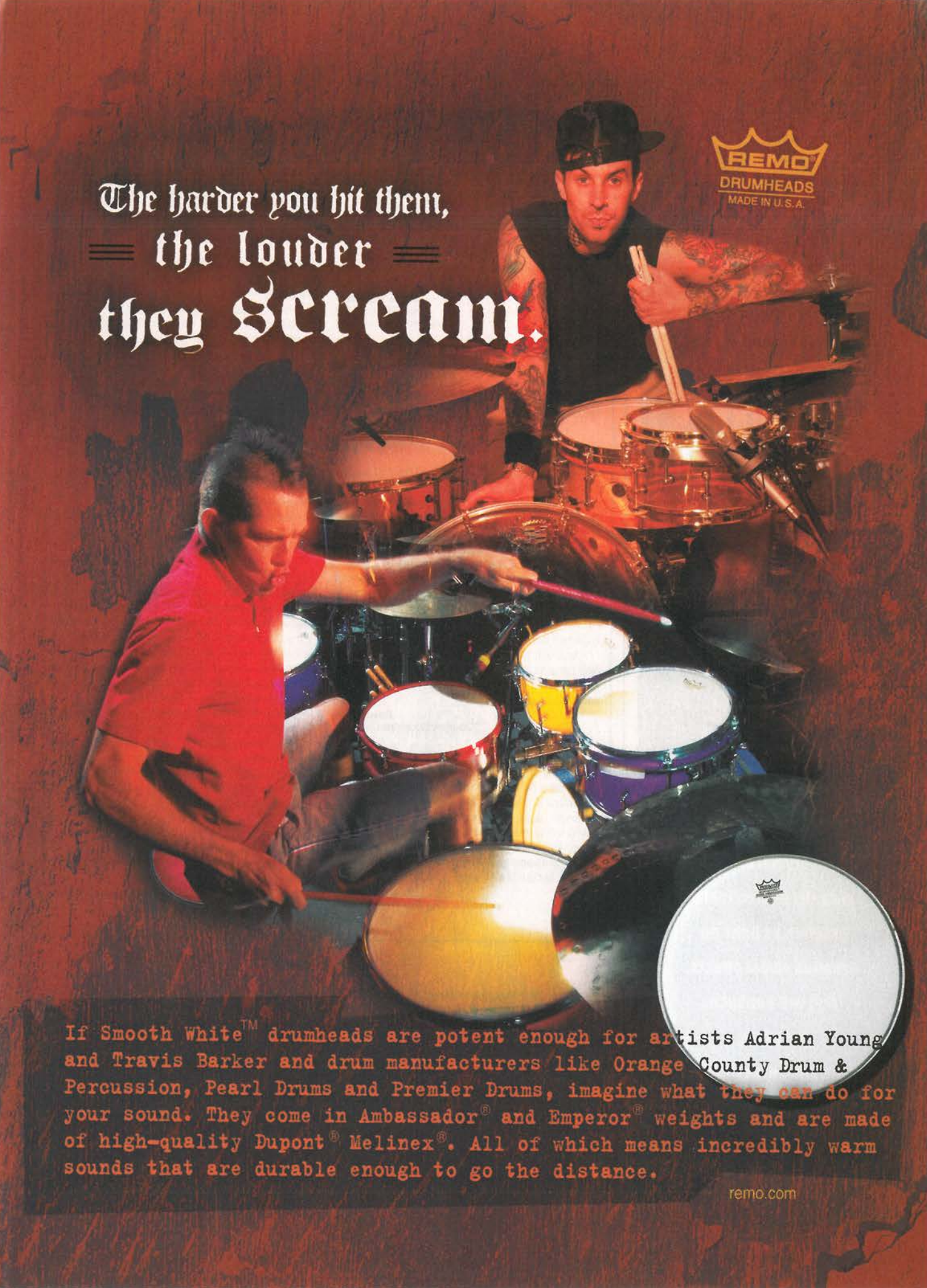
by Jimmy Moore

Flood Of Creation:

A Tribute To Elvin Jones

Elvin, as we listen to you, we get filled up with the love and joy of your spirit.
You gave yourself so freely to the music;
You freed yourself with music.
Sweat flowed out of you, and oceans flowed through you and your drums;
Wave after wave, carrying us on a musical journey.
Tom-toms rolling, cymbals splashing, crashing and swinging;
Your hi-hat cymbals calmly anchoring down turbulent, jubilant currents of rhythm, grounding them in Mother Earth.
Your bass drum and snare drum immersed in an exuberant conversation;
They were speaking in tongues, giving witness to your endless creative energies.
And dancing the dance of Elvin Jones.

by John Hale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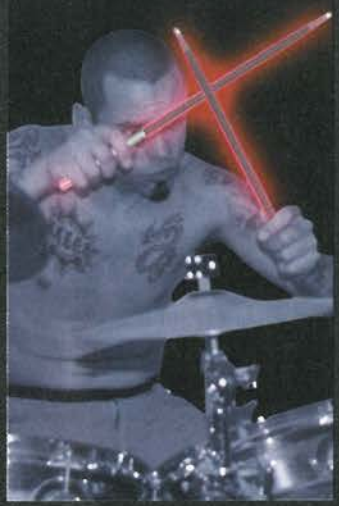
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Readers' Platform

MD Readers Poll

I just got the news of my induction into the *Modern Drummer* Readers Poll Hall Of Fame. *Wow.* I must admit that of all my life's accomplishments, this one certainly ranks up there as one of my proudest (and most unexpected!). The elite list of previous inductees is absolutely awe-inspiring, and I'm extremely humbled (and intimidated) to be in their company.

Thank you all for helping make my career as great as it has been.

Mike Portnoy
[Hall Of Fame and Prog Drummer winner]

Thanks so much for the 2004 *MD* Readers Poll Award. Congratulations to all the other participants; it's a privilege to be mentioned with you. Thanks to *MD* readers everywhere for your enthusiastic support of the music. This is an honor I will cherish always.

John Riley
[Big Band Drummer winner]

I'm honored to be among the winners of the *MD* Readers Poll. Since I heard "Skin Deep" at the age of seven...since I first entered a Tyler, Texas recording studio at fifteen...since I first saw Ron Tutt with Elvis, I have been awestruck with the drums. Out of love for the instrument I made a commitment to never let it down, and never to give only what I had to in order to get by.

I'm constantly amazed by the incredible talent that culminates in the wonderful grooves, feel, and chops we are treated to by today's gifted musicians. To be included with such dedicated and inspiring players is a dream come true for me.

Thank you to the readers and listeners, and to *MD*. And congratulations to all the winners. We are all lucky, blessed people to have the gift of music in these uncertain times. God bless.

Paul Leim
[Country Drummer winner]

I just can't believe it. Ever since I started reading *MD* when I was a kid, it's been a dream of mine to be in the Readers Poll. But to win?

Ironically, I almost quit trying to be a full-time drummer about two months before Shadows Fall asked me to play with them—again. (I had already turned them down once.) I'm glad I changed my mind!

All my dreams are starting to come true. Thank you from the bottom of my heart!

Jason Bittner
[Up & Coming Drummer winner]

My sincere appreciation to the staff at *Modern Drummer* for the Editors Achievement Award. It was a wonderful surprise, and it makes a lot of hard work worthwhile. Many thanks again.

Gary Gauger
Gauger Percussion Inc.

Thanks to everyone at *MD* for the Editors Achievement Award, and for your support of The Rhythmic Arts Project over the past several years. The project is widely recognized and appreciated largely as a result of your efforts to make every drummer on the planet aware of it. I am eternally grateful.

Eddie Tuduri
The Rhythmic Arts Project

I'm extremely honored and humbled to have my book *Ostinatos For The Melodic Drumset* voted #2 in the 2004 Readers Poll among so many other wonderful books and authors.

Joe Bergamini's transcriptions are wonderful and challenging. Fred Dinkins' book explains timekeeping better than any other book on the market. And who is not inspired by what Billy Ward writes?

Finally, Marc Atkinson's book on Vinnie is a magnificent work on the most inspiring drummer today. I'll take second to Vinnie any day! Thank you again.

Rob Leytham

Another *MD* Readers Poll, and still *MD*'s readers have yet to recognize one of rock's truly great drummers: Charlie Watts of The Rolling Stones. In the fifteen years that I've read *MD*, artists and writers alike have touted the importance of "playing for the song." To quote Dave Grohl in the July issue, "Playing from the heart and soul is more important than playing for trophies and speed."

Charlie Watts has been playing with heart and soul for more than forty years. The Stones—following Charlie's strong backbeat—made the 1960s special for millions of people, with such hits as "Satisfaction," "Let's Spend The Night Together," "Street Fighting Man," and "Paint It Black." Yet writer Jim Duffy doesn't even mention Charlie in his July article "Let There Be Drums: The Top-15 Drum Performances Of The 1960s."

Modern Drummer readers: Next year remember Charlie Watts in your Hall Of Fame voting. And Mr. Duffy: Take a look at the 1960s again.

Bradley Winicki

Oops!

In the *On The Move* department of the July '04 issue, the name of one of the featured drummers was incorrectly printed as Vince Van Donselaar. The gentleman's name is Vance Van Donselaar. We apologize for the error.

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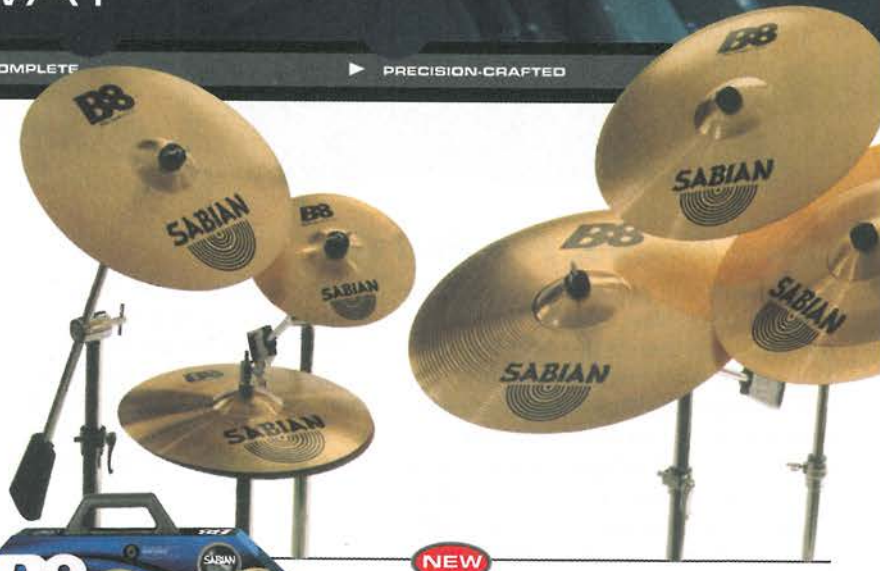

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Yamaha Power V History

I just purchased a beautiful, used fire-engine red Yamaha Power V six-piece drumset that sounds spectacular. The person who sold it to me told me that it was made in England—a claim substantiated by the "Made in England" inscription located on the logo badges. He thought that the shells are made of a combination of maple and basswood. They certainly sound like they are made from maple, anyway.

The bass drum rims are made of wood, the shells are wrapped, and the mounting hardware is the typical Yamaha Omni-Ball tom holder. There is, however, a black rubber band around the girth of the two-tom holder that mounts to the bass drum.

When did Yamaha make the Power Vs? What are they made of, and why aren't they being made anymore? Are they rare or common? **Darren Ewing**

According to Yamaha product specialist Jim Haler, "Power V drums were made in the Premier factory in England during a brief period when Yamaha owned Premier. In 1989 Yamaha wanted a bigger presence in Europe, and Premier was having financial difficulties. So Yamaha purchased the Premier factory and re-tooled it with their machinery. The Power V series was made there, along with a few Recording Custom kits for European distribution. Yamaha sold the factory back to Premier in 1993.

"Power V drumkits feature 9-ply Philippine mahogany shells. I know that there is a fair number of them around, because I get a couple of emails a month with questions from someone who has a kit."

Deep Snares, Pro And Con

I'm considering getting an 8x14 Tama Artwood snare. What acoustic characteristics come with a drum this big? Will there be a lot of extra ring because of all the space between the heads? How much deeper will the tone be than, say, that of a 5½x14 snare? Are there special tuning techniques that help the sound? Is it harder to get a good sound due to the extra depth? Also, are these drums very versatile, or do they perform best in one particular situation? Do they still articulate well? Any information you could provide would be very much appreciated. **Ben H.**

All other factors being equal, an 8"-deep snare will have a lower fundamental pitch than a shallower model will. It will also tend to sound "bigger" and perhaps more resonant, owing to the larger airspace between the heads. Overring can be controlled by muffling devices, and the pitch can be modified somewhat by how you tension the heads.

Some drummers like deeper-shelled drums because they can provide more "body" to the sound, even when the snare batter is tensioned highly. Others like the deep, "fatback" sound that can be achieved with a looser batter tension.

Snare sensitivity can be lower on an 8" drum than on a shallower drum, simply because of the distance between the impact on the batter head and the snares beneath the snare-side head. This can be addressed by the choice of snares, including the possible use of extra-wide (30- or 40-strand) models.

An 8" drum may not be as versatile as a 5½" or 6½" model. However, with proper head and snare selection, along with careful tuning, an 8" drum can provide a wide range of sounds that are applicable to many musical situations.

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Electronic Drum Sounds

I'm interested in using my own electronic drum samples—which I have on my computer—when playing in a live setting. What would be the best way to accomplish this? I use electronic drum pads and triggers, and the only module I've heard of that can accomodate pads and triggers, plus let you use your own customized sounds for the drums, is the Alesis DM Pro. Are there any alternative modules or samplers that could work with what I use? **Ryan Boland**

Our answer comes from *MD* electronic percussion specialist Rick Long. He responds, "When you want to use sounds from your computer in a piece of live stage gear, the first thing you have to consider is what format the sound exists in on your computer. If the sound can be saved as a "wave" file (.wav or Windows Audio Video) or .aif (Apple Macintosh type), then you can get the job done easily.

"If you're happy with your current drum module and just want to add more sounds, a sampler is the best way to go. The Yamaha A4000 or A5000 would do nicely. Roland also offers good samplers. You can load the samples from your computer directly into the sampler, then connect your drum module MIDI OUT to the sampler's MIDI IN, using a standard MIDI cable.

"As an example, let's say your snare drum sound is MIDI note 14. Set your drum module sounds for "NO VOICE" on MIDI note 14. Set the sampler so that the sound you want from your computer is assigned to MIDI note 14. Now when you hit the snare drum, your module doesn't make a sound. Instead, it transmits the MIDI note 14 to the sampler, and the sampler plays the sound from your computer that you assigned to that note.

"For simplicity of setup, you can route the audio output of the sampler to the AUX IN on your drum module (if it has one). Now the volume of the sounds from the sampler can be controlled from the drum module, and they'll be mixed with the module's audio output.

"If this setup doesn't work, check to make sure that your drum module's system settings are such that MIDI data is being transmitted to the MIDI OUT jack. It probably is, but some modules have the ability to turn that function off. You want it on.

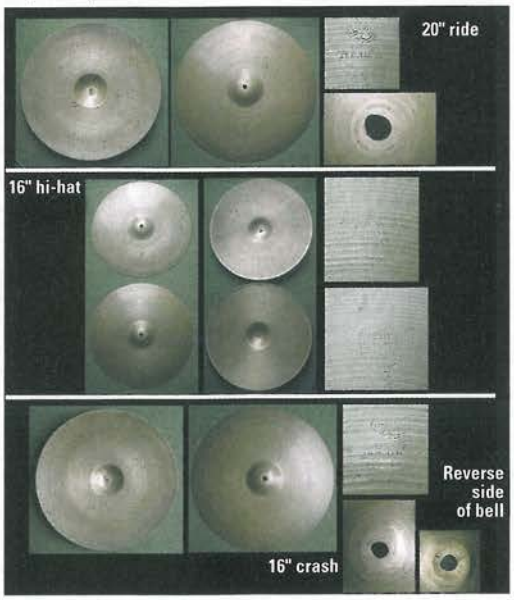
"If you are not happy with your present drum module, you might consider changing to a Yamaha DTXtreme. This module has a port for a SmartCard that can hold .aif files, effectively making the unit a drum module and sampler all in one."

Zildjians From Uruguay

I live in Uruguay, and I have a set of old A Zildjian cymbals that includes a 20" ride, a 16" crash, and a pair of 16" hi-hats. I'd like to know what era they're from. They don't have any model stamps, just the typical engraved logos. But those logos vary between the cymbals, especially on the hi-hats. Have Zildjian's logos changed since the time these cymbals were made?

The ride sounds like a medium-thin. Were there different designated ride types at the time it was made? I'm also very curious about the big hi-hats. They look like a matched pair, with the top cymbal thinner than the bottom. Were such cymbals in the catalog from that time? Are these cymbals collectible as vintage instruments? **Jorge Stark**

Zildjian director of education John King replies, "Without being able to properly see the lathing styles of the cymbals first-hand, I can only speculate. But it looks like your ride is a 1960s-era cymbal, while the crash and the hi-hats are a bit older—perhaps from the '50s. If the hi-hats have a center hole that's smaller than our current specification of ½", then they're likely from the 1940s.



"I'm not sure whether 16" hi-hats were ever offered in our catalog as such. But we often addressed requests for such cymbals by matching up the proper sizes and ensuring that the top cymbal had the same play elements as were found in the more generic sizes of hi-hats: lighter top, heavier bottom.

"Generally, the highest value that can be expected from any vintage cymbal would be the approximate price of a new cymbal of the same size. However, this could change if the cymbals have a unique sound character, or if they have documentation supporting special historical interest—such as having been used by a noted artist."

Count-Off Protocol

Are there any set rules on counting off a song? You know: "One, two, three, four," or "a-one and a-two," or "one, two...one, two, three, four." Any info would be highly appreciated. **Craig Hagan**

There are no set rules. It usually depends on what sort of feel is being described, how much time there is to count off the tune, and how well rehearsed the band is.

For example, if the tune has a "bounce" or "swing" feel, counting it off as "a-one and a-two..." helps to set the tempo and the feel. A standard pop or rock tune is usually counted as "one, two...one, two, three, four" to help give the musicians a warning and then the tempo. In quick show and segue situations, very often only the last two beats of the imaginary previous measure (or the count-off) are given, leading into the downbeat of the tune: "three, four...."

Basically, it's just a matter of what works best for any given situation.

Questions For MD's Drum Experts?
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Terry Bozzio's Bass Drum Technique

Q I saw you in a drum clinic several years ago. At the clinic, you played flam rudiments on two bass drums. How did you develop this technique? Also, how much tension do you use on your bass drum pedals while performing it? **Mark Gaffney**

A Thanks for the question. I developed that particular bass drum technique by imitating with my feet what I play with my hands. Try playing any short flam figure with your hands and then answering it with your feet. Begin slowly, and work up your speed gradually as the technique becomes more comfortable for you.

As for my pedal tension, I try to keep the pedals as loose as possible. I adjust the beater as long as possible, and at an angle of less than 45° from the head (so that it rests fairly close to the head). I figure the less effort I have to make to move the beater, the more relaxed and fluid my playing can be.

Jazz Veteran Danny Gottlieb On Ride Cymbals

Q I loved your cymbal sound when you played with Pat Metheny. What ride cymbal were you using back then? And what are your general thoughts on ride cymbals? **Brad Perlman**

A The rides I used with Pat were mainly Paiste 602 22" medium Flatrides. My main inspiration for using flat cymbals came from Bob Moses—one of the truly great drum innovators. He used some Zildjian flat rides with Gary Burton's band in the mid-1970s. I thought they sounded great, so when I joined Burton I went to the Zildjian factory and picked out a few. I ended up using three flats on Gary's *Passengers* album (ECM).

In 1976 I was playing with Pat Metheny and studying with Joe Morello, who was a Paiste endorser at the time. Paiste offered me an endorsement, and their sound designer, Freddie Studer—a terrific drummer—gave me his own 20" 602 Flatride. While I still enjoyed the Zildjians that I had, the Paiste 602 alloy had a very high frequency and a consistent pitch, which worked really well with the guitar sound that Pat Metheny was developing.

The 20" 602 flat didn't have enough projection for the music we were playing, but 22" flats did. I used a medium 602 on my right side and a thin 602 flat with two split copper rivets on the left. During the twenty years that I was a Paiste endorser, I experimented with 24" 602 flats, 24" Sound Creation flats, prototype mini-cup flats, heavy flats, and many others. But for Pat's music, the 22" 602s were perfect.

I switched back to Zildjian in 1995, and their great cymbal designer, Paul Francis, made some 22" flat ride prototypes for me. They weren't exactly the same as the Paiste flats, but they were really interesting from a musical standpoint. They've become mainstays in my cymbal collection.

A few years ago, my wife, Beth—who's a great percussionist—and I were on tour with singer Bobby McFerrin, opposite Chick Corea's band. Jeff Ballard was playing drums for Chick, and I noticed that he had a small ride cymbal. I figured it had to be Chick's own classic 18" Zildjian flat ride that had been used on many of his early albums. But it was a prototype made by Paul Francis that incorporated a sound similar to the old Paiste. I believe that sound design is found in the 18" and 22" K Zildjian Dark flat rides. I now have one of each, and I use them all the time.

Stick choice is important when playing any ride cymbal, but it's critical with a flat ride. I've found that a heavier stick with nylon tips adds to the projection and high end of my 22" flat. That's why I've been using Hot Sticks 2Bs since the mid-'80s (in addition to the fact that they're so well balanced). But I use a variety of weights and sizes, depending on the musical application. For example, the Vic Firth Peter Erskine wood-tip stick sounds great on a large flat cymbal.

I hope that this information is helpful to you. Good luck in your search for new and interesting cymbal sounds.

Setup And Tuning Tips From Pat Benatar's

Billy Ashbaugh

Q You're an incredible drummer, and a true idol of mine. I'd like to know if you tune your kit yourself for live performances. If you do, could you give me a few pointers? Your drumset has always sounded great at any show I've attended, and it sounds great on your video. Also, would you please describe your touring setup? **Ricky M.**

A Thanks very much for the kind words. I do tune my own drums. Tuning is a subject that could easily take a book to address, but I'll try to give you some pointers that have helped me throughout the years.

For the kick, I like the batter head quite loose—almost to the point of seeing some wrinkles in the head. I use the Evans EMAD head with their EQ Pad (muffling pillow) slightly touching both heads. This really helps to get a "beefy" tone with a lot of punch. I also keep the front head at a medium tension.

For the snare, I keep the bottom head tight, with the snares at a medium tension. Tightening the snares too much will choke the sound of the drum. I usually keep the snare batter quite tight as well. I like the response of a tighter snare head; it really helps the ghost notes to cut through. Lately, though, on gigs with Pat Benatar, I'll tune the top head down a bit for a little warmer tone that fits the music better.

I tune the bottom heads of my toms a third higher than the top. This will give the drum tone a natural decay as it rings out. Remember that it is very important to get each head (top and bottom) in tune with itself. When you tap the head, you should hear only one note of frequency ringing.

One final point: Pay attention to how the drum *feels* when you strike it. I use this sensation, as well as my ears, when I tune. The stick will respond differently when a drum breathes properly from being in tune.

My setup changes from gig to gig, but here's what I used for most of the *NSYNC tours: DW drums, including 8", 10", 14", and 16" "fast" toms, an 18x22 bass drum, a 7x13 Edge snare, and a 6x10 Collectors series maple snare. I used Paiste Signature series cymbals, including an 8" splash, 16" and 17" Full crashes, a 16" custom-made heavy China, an 18" heavy China, a 20" Dry Full ride, and 13" and 14" heavy hi-hats.

I hope this helps you out a bit. Good luck!

Repeat Bar

A Classic Quote From MD's Past

"When I play music, I try to play ideas. I'm not concerned with what rudiment I'm going to use or what pattern I'm going to play."
Jazz great **Jack DeJohnette**, October 1989

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YAMAHA DRUMS ELECTRONICS

Slipknot's Joey Jordison
Home With Houdini

Alex Solca

"The fact is, drummers are never satisfied with what they have," says Slipknot's Joey Jordison. "They're always rearranging stuff, changing drum tunings, and swapping cymbal setups. There's no musician more finicky than a drummer."

And Jordison ought to know, as the platinum-selling masked drummer recently found himself swapping pieces of gear within his own setup for the recording sessions of the Des Moines, Iowa–based metal act's latest full-length, *Vol. 3 (The Subliminal Verses)*, on Roadrunner Records.

Tracked at the legendary Houdini Estate in the Laurel Canyon region of Los Angeles with producer Rick Rubin (Slayer, System Of A Down), *Vol. 3* sees Jordison upgrading snare sizes. He's now playing a 6½x14 drum, up from his old 12". But according to Joey, "It's still torqued to all hell." He also added a second kick to his recording setup.

"I usually just use one kick drum with a double pedal," Jordison explains. "But you can only get so much attack with the left-side beater of a double pedal, because the beater is offset from the center of the head. The sound is not as punchy as the main beater. No matter what we did, we couldn't match the power of the two kicks."

In addition to the above-mentioned gear maneuvers, Jordison—flanked by percussionists Shawn Crahan and Chris Fenn—also incorporated a marching snare in his setup. The drummer utilized his four years of drum corps experience on *Vol. 3*, specifically on the tune "Blister Exists," which breaks down into a colossal military-style cadence. "I came up with this beat," Jordison says. "Then Shawn came in and added his part to it. And Chris was there, so we just kept jamming on it for a while. Once we had the basic structure of the cadence, it just became a part of the song. To record it, we placed three snare drums in the foyer of the Houdini house, which was all concrete, and we layered the part twenty-some times each—so that's like sixty different huge-sounding snare drums. And now it's one of the staples of the album."

Waleed Rashidi

Tiger Army's Fred Hell
Coming Back From Being Shot

When drummer Fred Hell was shot four times during a home invasion robbery, he was left with a bullet lodged in his skull. A member of LA-based psychobilly trio Tiger Army, Fred faced a long recovery and the possibility that he might never play drums again. "I lost all feeling in my left arm," the drummer says. "I could barely use my hand, and I couldn't hold sticks or anything."

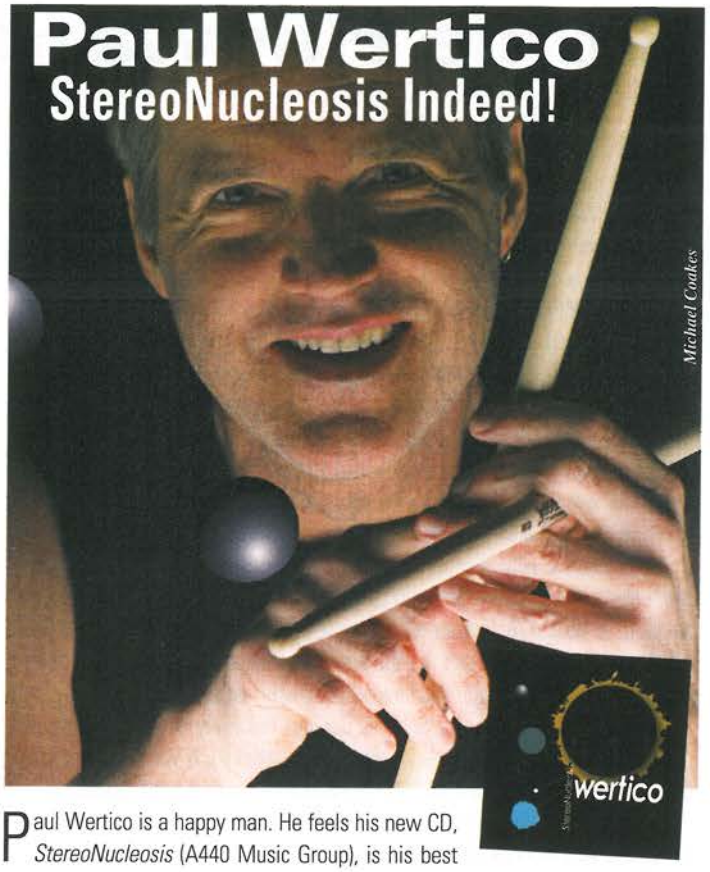
Beyond his physical limitations, Fred discovered he'd lost his sense of rhythm. "When I heard a song," he says, "I couldn't keep a beat. It was very scary." Fred eventually retrained his left arm to do *everything*. In fact, he relearned the drums as if he'd never played before. "My sense of rhythm returned," Fred says, "and when my left hand started coming back, I knew I'd be able to play again no matter what."

Six months after the March 2003 shooting, Fred joined Tiger Army on tour. However, when the group entered the studio to record its third album, *III: Ghost Tigers Rise*, it became apparent that the drummer wasn't sufficiently rehabilitated. "We were doing twelve-hour days, but I was barely able to play for three hours," Fred admits. "My performance just wasn't up to standard for the record."

At that point, the band asked their friend, drummer and tech Mike Fasano, to fill in. While Fred couldn't record the tracks for the record, his daily presence in the studio ensured that his imprint was captured on the tracks. "Fred came in with a great attitude," Fasano says. "He showed me stickings and helped me *mentally* with beats and parts. This would have been a challenging record even for a true session guy, because this music is all about imperfections and movement. It was one of the best and most rewarding experiences I've had playing on a record." Fred adds, "Mike nailed everything and had great input. His positive energy also really contributed to my recovery."

With Tiger Army back on tour, Fred feels that he's playing better than ever. "I'm definitely a stronger person because of all this," he says. "I also feel lucky to be playing again. And since psychobilly music has a unique drumming style, I'm motivated to show what that kind of drumming is all about. I want to redefine it and bring it to a new level." **Gail Worley**

Paul Wertico
StereoNucleosis Indeed!



Michael Cookes

Paul Wertico is a happy man. He feels his new CD, *StereoNucleosis* (A440 Music Group), is his best effort yet. "I did it in my house," he says excitedly. "With the advance from A440, I bought Sonar software and a computer setup. I was able to take time and track to my heart's delight, so the record is very organic. I got to orchestrate it with a lot of little details. For instance, I changed my cymbals and snare for each tune. I also used the Paiste percussion set and 'found' sounds, because everything was here at home to play. There are six tunes and percussion interludes, so it's sort of like a suite."

The genesis of the project came about through meeting nineteen-year-old musician/engineer Brian Peters. "He brought over his computer recording setup and we tracked some things with it," Paul says. "I really liked the ease of recording. Then I bought my setup. Brian ended up staying at my house—it was almost like having a son. He co-produced and engineered things." Peters also contributed bass, violin, and guitar, augmenting Paul's working trio of guitarist John Moulder and bassist Eric Hochberg. Paul's wife, Barbara, played keyboards and wrote or co-wrote three of the tracks.

Paul's other regular gig is as a member of guitarist Larry Coryell's trio. "We have a great working relationship," Paul says. "The gigs are great and Larry lets me play. It's also a dream to work with bassists Mark Egan and Buster Williams." The trio has two new CDs out: *Tricycles,* on In+Out Records, and *The Power Trio Live In Chicago,* on HighNote Records. A new release is coming out on the Favored Nations label later this year.

Paul continues to "teach up a storm" in Chicago, both in private lessons and at Northwestern and Roosevelt Universities. "Teaching has been great," he says. "It involves a lot of problem solving, which gives you great ideas and helps you solidify your theories. I'm in the process of writing a drum book based on all of these things."

Wertico is also a first-call studio musician, both in his hometown of Chicago and around the world. "I have two recording sessions coming up in Greece!" he says excitedly. As if that isn't enough, Paul is still the drummer for the legendary Polish rock band SBB, regularly flying to Poland for gigs. "I've never been busier," he concludes with a smile. **Michael Bettine**

Richie Hayward

Dylan Detour, New Feat

Last February, Richie Hayward received a surprise phone call. It was from Bob Dylan's camp, asking the drummer if he was interested in going out with Dylan on a five-week tour. "It was an offer I couldn't refuse," the Little Feat drummer says. "I've been a huge fan of Dylan for forty years."

Just like you'd expect, Hayward confirms that Dylan is a very introverted person who doesn't talk much. But that was no matter to Hayward, who recalls his first meeting with the artist. "There he was, standing there, just playing his songs," Richie says with a bit of awe in his voice. "Imagine what that was like."

There was very little that Hayward could do to prepare for the gig, which, he says with a laugh, was "a real science project. We rehearsed for two days before the first gig. And during rehearsal Dylan never played the same song twice—or even sang! The learning curve was difficult, but Dylan's regular drummer, George Riceli, was playing too, and that helped."

As for playing with another drummer, well, Richie didn't mind, but Dylan didn't like it. "We started out with two drummers," Hayward says, "but while we were in Boston, Bob went out to the sound equipment area, saw the two drumsets on stage, and didn't like the way it looked, so we struck one drumset. For the last few gigs George and I traded off. It was very unusual."

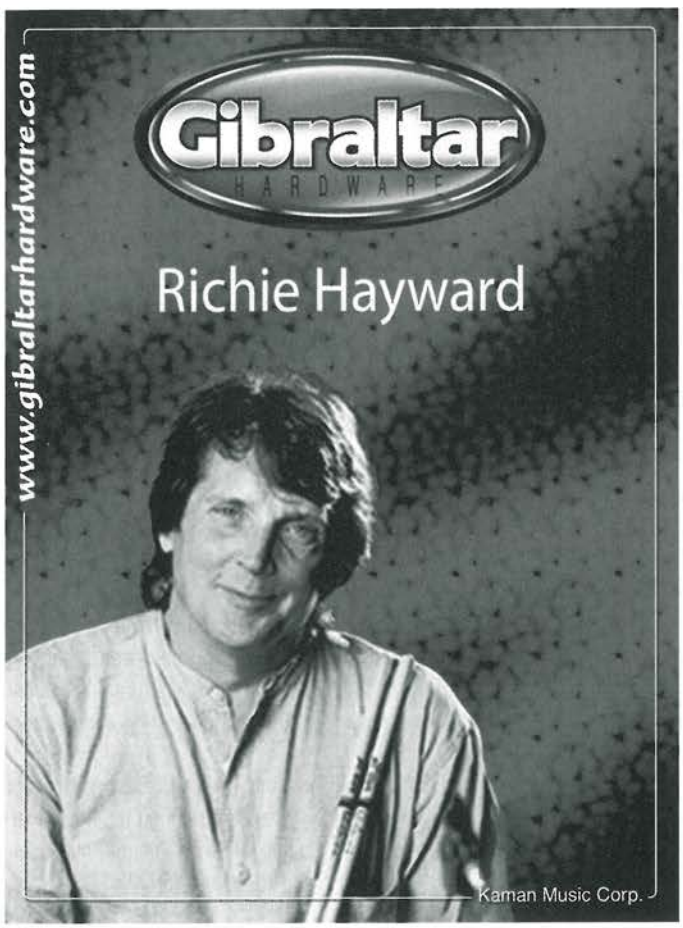
Hayward says his biggest thrill was playing "Positively 4th Street," "Ballad Of A Thin Man," "All Along The Watchtower," "Just Like A Woman," and "Lay Lady Lay." "Man, it was *so* cool," Richie enthuses. "It was a great experience."

Hayward left Dylan a couple of days before the tour ended to meet up with Little Feat for a five-day rehearsal to tour in support of their new album, *Kickin' It At The Barn*, and their live CD and DVD, *Highwire Act Live In St. Louis 2003*. In fact, this is a big year for Little Feat, as it's their *thirty-fifth* anniversary.

Richie says he particularly enjoyed recording *Kickin'* because the band did it in a barn in rustic old Topanga Canyon with an outboard remote setup. "There were no time pressures," he explains. "We didn't have to set up or tear down, and it was very casual and creative."

Hayward and crew are now back on the road yet again. Does he have any advice for the road-weary? "Rest a lot," Richie says. "Eat and sleep when you can, because you never know when you're going to get to next. It all pays off, though. The way I look at the road is, we get paid for the airplane travel, the waiting around, and all the hassles. But we *play* for free, because that's the fun part."

Robyn Flans



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KITTIE'S Mercedes Lander

Playing For Real

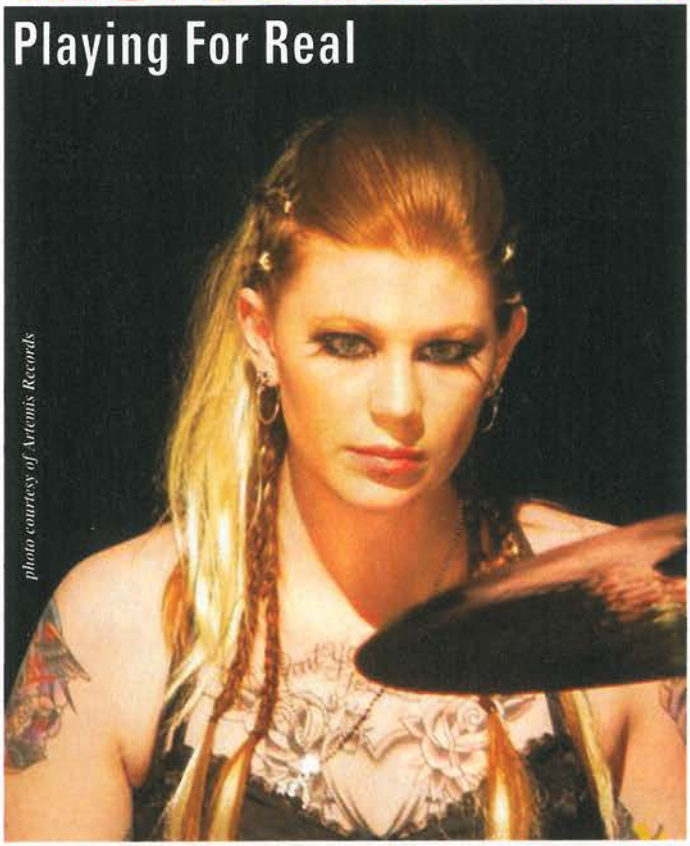


photo courtesy of Artemis Records

Listening to Kittie's new disc, *Until The End*, you might wonder how much of it is ProTooled. Lately it seems *everyone* is pasting together parts, and, of course, the end result is always perfect. On a closer listen to the disc, though, you start to think, maybe it *is* played live. It's raw and not so perfect, but in a good way.

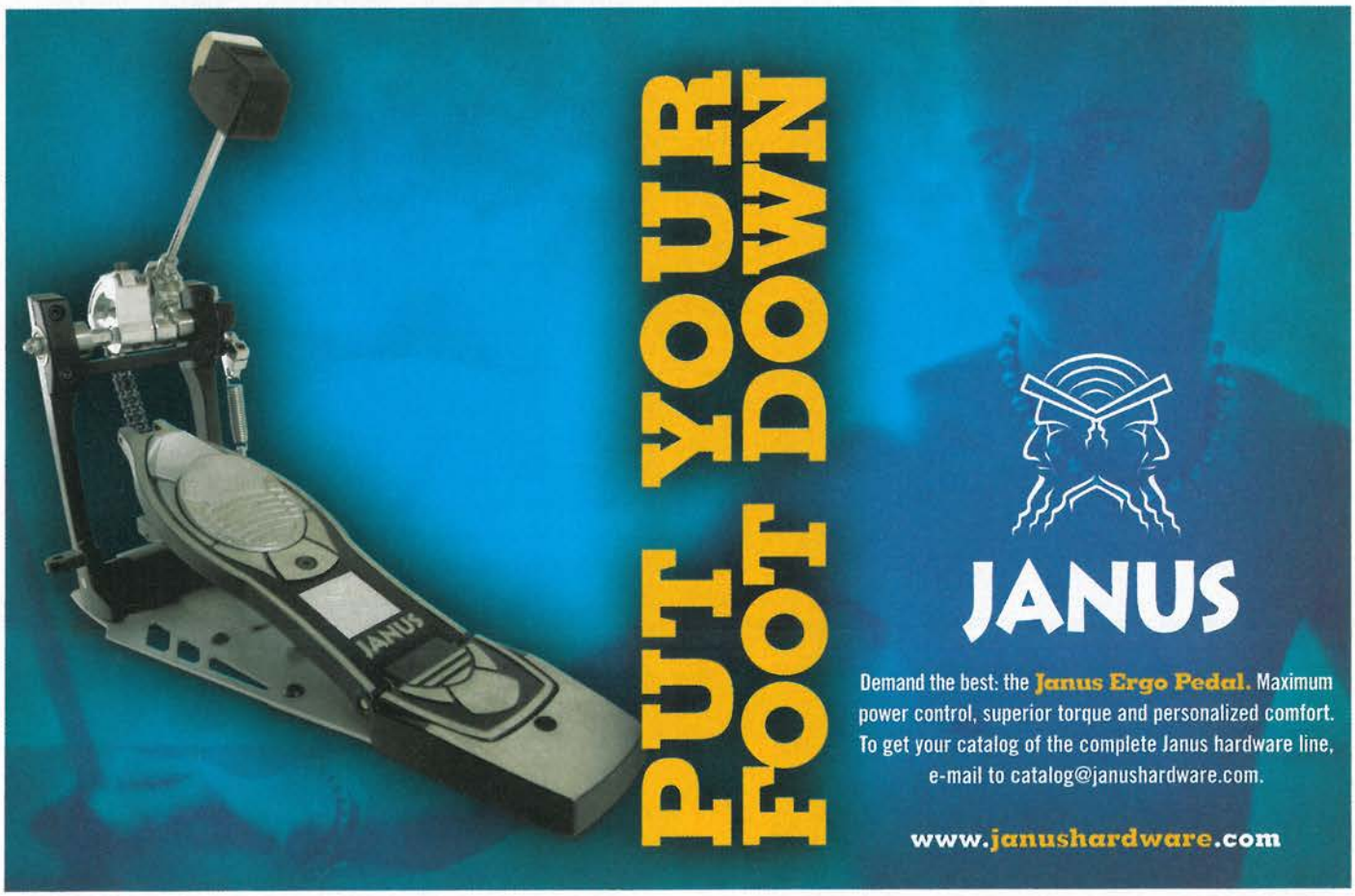
So the first question for drummer Mercedes Lander is, are you playing on the record? "Of course I am," she urges. "I wouldn't have it any other way, trust me. I'm a jerk when it comes to this stuff. I think I'm good enough. I don't need to have my parts fixed. And you know what? The good thing about this record is, there's no digital editing on it, and I didn't play to a click track. I hate that stuff! There are a lot of bands out there who use digital editing, but I think that's cheating. Yeah, there are some imperfections on our new record, but that's what makes the music *real*."

Mercedes is only twenty years old, but she's been playing music since she was five. Besides drums, she studied piano for close to ten years and took vocal lessons. She also co-wrote more than half of the songs on the band's new CD. As for Lander's drumming, you can hear a Vinnie Paul influence. "Vinnie is awesome," she says. "He's a very different drummer, and he's definitely been a big influence on my playing."

Mercedes, along with her bandmates—sister Morgan on lead vocals and guitar, Jennifer Arroyo on bass, and new member Lisa Marx on guitar—are currently on tour promoting *Until The End*. "When we play live, I'm always ready to try different things," the drummer says. "I'm *always* going for it, trying to put in that extra double kick roll—just for fun."

For more with Mercedes, check out www.moderndrummer.com.

Billy Amendola



NEWS

Tommy Igoe appears on *Modern Vibe*, the new release by Arthur Lipner.

Nathaniel Morton is on tour with *American Idol* winner Fantasia Barrino.

Barry Keane and **Sean O'Grady** are on Gordon Lightfoot's *Harmony*.

Per Hanson is on James Cotton's *Baby Don't You Tear My Clothes*.

Ian Falgout was recently in the studio with Windsor, recording their album *Melting Highway*, as well as with Christian Love (son of The Beach Boys' Mike Love). Falgout has also been drumming and singing lead for the Southern California band Twig & The Berries, as well as playing dates with The Mudflaps.

Sim Cain is on Elliott Sharp's *Do The Don't*.

Bruce Brand is on Holly Golightly's *Down Gina's At 3*.

Chris Culos is on O.A.R.'s new live release, *34th & 8th*.

Daniel Glass is working on a live offering from his band, The Daniel Glass Quartet.

Matt McDonough is in the studio with Mudvayne, looking towards a fall release.

Sam Loeffler is in the studio with Chevelle.

Paul Leim can be heard on new releases by Reba McEntire, Jonell Mosser, Hank Williams Jr., and Lonestar, and he's on three cuts of the new Kenny Chesney CD. Paul is also producing new artist Donovan Chapman, who has an album due out soon.

Larry Lelli performed with the Broadway cast of *Assassins* on the Tony Awards broadcast. He will also be heading into the studio shortly to record the cast album.

Sam Aliano is recording with Gongzilla as well as rehearsing with the group for their upcoming tour. (For more info go to www.lolorecords.com.)

Todd Sucherman played on tracks with Paul McCartney, Eric Clapton, and Elton John for the new Brian Wilson CD, *Gettin' In Over My Head*. (Todd is on twelve tracks and **Eddie Bayers** is on one.) Todd will be on the road with Styx for most of this year, supporting the new *Styx Anthology* CD.

Craig Pilo is touring with The Red Elvises to support their new CD, *Lunatics And Poets* (www.redelvises.com). He has also finished a CD with Angela Carole Brown, *The Slow Club*, due out in the fall.

After finishing up six months of tour dates with country artist Joe Diffie, **David Northrup** is back on tour with Travis Tritt in support of his new Columbia release, *My Honky Tonk Past*. For tour dates and more on David, go to www.davidnorthrup.com.

Bobby Jarzombek has replaced **Richard Christy** in metal powerhouse Iced Earth.

Chad Smith and **Mike Wengren** were featured at the 2004 Drum Daze at Columbus Pro Percussion.

Daniel Adair and his group 3 Doors Down have created the Better Life Foundation, a new charity to benefit children and young adults with special needs. The band distributed $90,000 from their March 26 homecoming concert to sixteen Gulf Coast charities.

Steve Ferrone is currently working on a live album with Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers, a second greatest-hits collection, and a new studio release for 2005.

Jimmy DeGrasso and **Ron Thaler** are both featured on the *11th Annual Ultimate Drummer's Weekend Drum Festival* DVD. The festival was held in Melbourne, Australia.

Igor Cavalera is on the new Sepultura release, *The Best Of Sepultura*.

Omar Hakim is touring Europe and the US with Chic.

Matt Wilson is on the road with The Charlie Haden Liberation Music Orchestra as well as his own quartet. He's also been in the studio with Curtis Stigers.

New Skin by Mount Analog is in fact the new solo effort from Seattle sound manipulator/keyboardist/drummer **Tucker Martine.**

Paul Douglas, **Sly Dunbar**, **Lloyd Knibbs**, **?uestlove**, and **Adrian Young** appear on Toots & The Maytals' new all-star album, *True Love*, which also features Trey Anastasio, Eric Clapton, Jeff Beck, No Doubt, The Roots, and Keith Richards, among others.

Kevin Byers is on *Here Comes...* by The Monolith.

Don Powell is on *The Best Of Slade*, a cool collection of the glam rock masters' best work.

Patrick Keeler appears with The Do Waters (featuring The White Stripes' Jack White) on country legend Loretta Lynn's *Van Lear Rose*.

Jon Leidersdoff is on Sarah Hudson's (Mark's daughter) debut CD, *Naked Truth*. Jon is also touring with Sarah. **Cindy Blackman** plays on the first single, "Girl On The Verge."

Steve Shelley is on Sonic Youth's new CD, *Sonic Nurse*.

Chris Slade is on *Silent Nation*, the new disc by '80s supergroup Asia.

Anthony "Tiny" Biuso is recording and touring with The Dickies.

DRUM DATES

This month's important events in drumming history

Gone but not forgotten: **Cozy Cole** was born on 10/17/06, **Papa Jo Jones** on 10/7/11, **Art Blakey** on 10/11/19 (he passed away in October of 1990). **Ed Blackwell** was born on 10/10/29 and passed away on 10/7/92. **Billy Higgins** was born on 10/11/36, **John Guerin** on 10/31/39. **Billy Gladstone** passed away in October of '61, **Gene Krupa** on 10/16/73, and **Al Jackson** on 10/1/75.

Jazz is on the charts when The Ramsey Lewis Trio (with **Redd Holt** on drums) chart a top-5 hit with the single "The 'In' Crowd," the week of 10/9/65.

Hall & Oates' second record, *Abandoned Luncheonette*, which features the hit "She's Gone," is certified gold three weeks after its release on 10/5/76. **Bernard Purdie** is on drums.

In October of 1982, Mattel introduced Synsonics electronic drum pads.

On 10/9/82, Rush (with **Neil Peart** on drums) hit number-1 on *Billboard's* Mainstream Rock chart with "New World Man."

Happy Birthday!

Earl Palmer (studio legend): 10/25/24

Paul Humphrey (sessions): 10/10/35

John "Jabo" Starks (James Brown): 10/26/38

Roger Hawkins (Memphis legend): 10/16/45

Mike Clark (Headhunters): 10/3/46

Chris Slade (Manfred Mann, Asia): 10/30/46

Trilok Gurtu (independent): 10/30/51

Keith Knudsen (Doobie Brothers): 10/18/52

Tico Torres (Bon Jovi): 10/7/53

AJ Pero (Twisted Sister): 10/14/59

Larry Mullen Jr. (U2): 10/31/61

Tommy Lee (Mötley Crüe): 10/3/62

Chad Smith (Red Hot Chili Peppers): 10/25/62

Mike Malinin (Goo Goo Dolls): 10/10/67

Tony Royster Jr. (independent): 10/9/84

Zak Hanson (Hanson): 10/22/85

MD Radio — To hear some of the artists mentioned in this month's *Update*, go to MD Radio at www.moderndrummer.com.

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Yamaha Stage Custom Nouveau Drums

Taking "Entry" To A New Level

HITS

"jazz" size rack toms have great attack and pure tone

kick drum sounds good whether wide open or muffled

snare is warm and responsive

hardware is pro quality

MISSES

floor tom sound is hard to control

snare might not be crisp enough for some tastes

matte finish, while beautiful, scratches easily

by Robin Tolleson

Yamaha's Stage Custom Nouveau series has a lot going for it. For starters, try looks, sound, and durability. And then consider that these attributes come in a package that's priced firmly in the entry-level category.

Looks

Actually, forget about entry-level for a minute. Any drummer would appreciate the construction and finish on the Stage Custom Nouveau (which we'll refer to hereafter as the SCN for convenience). The 8-ply shells are made by layering Philippine mahogany, falkata, and either oak or birch, depending on the finish desired. The kit we received for review used oak, in a Matte Sienna finish that highlighted the distinctive grains in the wood. The drums looked great. But a word of caution: Matte finishes are subject to scratching, so care is needed in maintaining them.

Sound

The SCN 5½x14 snare sounds deeper than it is, and its wood shell gives it warmth and roundness of tone. While it proved very responsive in lighter playing, and delivered very nice rimshots and stick clicks, some drummers may desire a higher, more "cracking" sound out of a snare for high-volume playing.

Of the size configurations available in the SCN series, I really like the 8x10 and 9x12 rack toms, in conjunction with the 16x16 floor tom. (That's the SCN2FS57 package). It's a very versatile configuration. The deep, thin-shelled rack toms were a pleasure to lay into. They looked, felt, and sounded like jazz power toms—crisp and very tuneful, but with plenty of oomph for rock or fusion situations.

The floor tom was a little boingy. I thought I could remedy the problem by putting a coated head on it. (All the drums except the snare came equipped with clear batter heads.) That did help to a certain degree. But the floor tom remained the hardest drum to get tuned to my liking. I like a floor tom that's kind of warm. This one moved plenty of air, but the attack and tone was quite raucous.

The 22" kick drum produced a very deep, full-bodied tone. I enjoyed playing it without any internal muffling. The batter head had a built-in tone ring, and that's really all I want or need. Some drummers may prefer a more controlled, gated sound, and this drum can deliver that too, with more internal muffling. But I think it deserves to breathe, so it can really deliver its sonic and sub-sonic goods.

Hardware

The first thing to talk about here is the Nouveau lug design. For those who are unfamiliar with the concept, it involves specially designed round-headed pegs attached to the drumshell. The tuning lugs hook on to these pegs by way of a piece of reinforced composite material, before tightening and tuning. There is no longer a direct connection between the lug casing and the shell body. The idea is to allow the shell to vibrate as freely as possible. I'm not an acoustical engineer, but I can tell you that these drums do ring out well.

Besides the sound, another cool thing about the Nouveau lug design is that it allows for easier drumhead changing. You never have to fully remove the lugs from the rim. Once loosened enough, the composite lug casing lifts off the pegs on the shell.

I must admit that I have a bit of an aesthetic problem with the Nouveau lug concept. Call it what you will, you still have an obviously synthetic material on a nice, natural drum finish. In the case of our review kit, it wasn't an unattractive look, with the black lugs against the brown finish (shown at right). But some purists may hanker for traditional chrome parts, despite the convenience advantage offered by the Nouveau lugs' quick-change capability.

The YESS (Yamaha Enhanced Sustain System) mounting system found on Yamaha's higher-priced kits is standard on the SCN toms. On the rack toms, the mounting bracket is attached to the shell with two bolts, allowing the toms to be mounted without requiring holes in their shells for the mounting rods to pass through. A similar system is used on the floor-tom leg brackets for increased sustain.

The pro-quality 700 series cymbal stands that come with the kit feature single-braced legs and a boom arm—which, when not in use, will disappear into the tube. The bass drum pedal and hi-hat stand that accompany the kit are simple, lightweight, fast, and responsive.

Yamaha's hardware, in general, is super-solid. One could probably do a handstand on the rack-tom mounting system. This sort of durability is perfect for hard-hitting young rock drummers, or for weekend pros who need reliable gear at a reasonable price.

Conclusion

Entry-level kits have been getting better and better over the past few years, and Yamaha's Stage Custom series has been a leader in that progress. The Nouveau version offers additional musicality and high-tech features that should further enhance the series' reputation and appeal.

THE NUMBERS

Five-piece kit (SCN2FS57), including hardware **$1,349**
(714) 522-9011, www.yamahadrums.com.

Paiste New Signature Dark Energy Cymbals

New Musical Hybrids

HITS

cymbals combine a dry sound with bright overtones

variety of sizes provides a good range of volume and pitch

consistency among the various models

MISSES

13" hi-hats lack the richness of tone enjoyed by other Dark Energy models

by Rick Mattingly

Although the logo on Paiste's Dark Energy cymbals is that of the "Signature" series, the company refers to the new Dark Energy rides, crashes, and hi-hats as the first offerings in the "New Signature" classification. This name will serve as an umbrella for a variety of cymbals that don't have to fit the characteristics or personality of an existing series. With that in mind, the Dark Energy cymbals are said to fall somewhere between Paiste's Signature and Traditionals series in order to "combine depth, darkness, total musicality, and complex harmonics with brilliance, richness, and projection."

The part about combining darkness and brilliance had me wondering at first, but after playing the cymbals, I now see what Paiste means. The cymbals do have a "dark" character in terms of pitch and contained overtones, giving them a timbre that resembles cymbals preferred by many jazz drummers. However, as contained as the overtones are, they have a bright, shimmering quality that makes these cymbals unique.

That brightness certainly helps the Dark Energies project, as compared to most "dry" cymbals. But it's not an aggressive, metallic, "cutting" type of projection. Drummers who like to bash can stop reading right now, because these cymbals are not what you need for extreme high-volume situations. They speak best at low to medium volume levels. Players who perform in expressive settings that allow them to explore the nuances of a cymbal will delight in the responsiveness of the Dark Energy models.

From left: Dark Energy 14" Mark I hi-hats, 18" Mark II crash, 20" Mark I ride, and 20" Mark II ride

Rides

Dark Energy rides are available in two models: Mark I and Mark II. Each is available in 20", 21", and 22" diameters, and all are of medium weight. Visually, the Mark I's have a duller, more "unfinished" look than the Mark II's. Both have very noticeable hammer marks, which appear to be random in the style of hand-hammered cymbals.

In general, Mark I rides sound drier than Mark II rides, but the overall characteristics are similar. A drummer could certainly use one of each in a setup (perhaps in 20" and 22" sizes) and switch between them within the same tune to get different but complementary colors.

To be more specific, the 20" Mark I is extremely dry, but has just enough overtones to keep it from sounding metallic or anvil-like. This cymbal's strongest feature is its definition. No matter how loudly I played it, the "click" from the stick was never buried under a wash of overtones. This made the 20" Mark I very controllable. In terms of volume, it would work better in acoustic, small-group settings than in a big band or amplified situation. On the other hand, small-group drummers often prefer more overtone spread to fill out the sound, so this model might have limited applications.

The 20" Mark II is brighter and fuller than the Mark I, but it still has a contained, dry sound. Although the overtones had a bit more spread than on the Mark I, the definition never dissolved in a washy sound. The cymbal remained very controllable.

The timbres of the 21" Mark I and Mark II rides were very similar to their respective 20" siblings, but the extra inch gave them a bigger, fuller sound. If a 20" ride is typically your preference, you might want to consider the 21" versions of the Dark Energy rides. I rate both of these as considerably more versatile than the 20" versions.

Over the years, I've reviewed countless rides that were available in 20" and 22" diameters, and more often than not, the two sizes barely resembled each other. But Paiste has achieved a remarkable degree of consistency of timbre in the three sizes of each model.

The 22" models obviously had a bigger sound, by virtue of their size. With the Mark II, the balance between definition and overtones was not as good as with the smaller models. When I really laid into it, the definition started getting lost in a wash. The 22" Mark I, however, with its narrower spread of overtones, retained its definition at high volume levels. So with the 22" Dark Energy rides, I would count the Mark I as the more versatile.

Crashes

The Dark Energy line includes crash cymbals in 15", 16", 17", 18", and 19" diameters. (The 15" model was not yet available when this review was written, so my comments are based on the other four sizes.) All are designated as Mark I, although visually and sonically they have more in common with the Mark II ride cymbals than with the Mark I models.

The Dark Energy crashes are all medium-light, which gives them a quick response but not a lot of body, volume, or sustain—especially in the smaller sizes. That might sound like a negative assessment, but I've played countless acoustic gigs where I was afraid to hit a crash for fear of obliterating the sound of the other instruments. Yes, I've tried various small-diameter crashes, but most of them sounded brittle.

The Dark Energy crashes, by contrast, sound very "shimmery." The overtones are high-pitched, which could help them cut through in somewhat louder situations. But they sound best when played with a light to medium stroke.

As with the ride cymbals, each crash reminded me of cymbals that are an inch smaller in terms of their pitch and body. For example, the 16" Dark Energy crash reminded me of a typical 15" crash with its extremely high pitch, fast response, and quick decay.

Also like the ride cymbals, the consistency of sound among the various crash sizes was impressive. Each cymbal was a bit lower in pitch and had a slightly bigger sound than the size below. Of the four cymbals I tested, I would rate the 17" and 18" models as the most versatile. The 19" starts to lose some response due to its size, and its pitch is pretty low for a crash. The 16", as already mentioned, has an extremely high pitch, and its lack of body reminded me of a large splash.

Hi-Hats

New Signature Dark Energy Hats are available in 13", 14", and 15" diameters, each pair consisting of a medium-thin top and an extra-heavy bottom cymbal. Like the crashes, these are all labeled Mark I. Visually, the top of each cymbal resembles the crashes and the Mark II rides. But the underside of the bottom cymbal (the side that faces up when mounted on a hi-hat stand) has the "unfinished" look of a Mark I ride. The underside of the top cymbal has that same rough look in the center section, but the outer area has the smooth, polished look of a more typical Paiste cymbal.

Hi-Hats, top view (above), and showing underside of top cymbal

Starting with the smallest size, I have to rate the 13" hats as the weakest entry in the entire Dark Energy line. I generally like 13" hi-hats, but these lacked the richness of tone enjoyed by the other Dark Energy models, sounding somewhat brittle. Their strong point was their "chick" sound, which was clean and precise. But when played closed with a stick, the hi-hats sounded very thin. Even when opened very slightly, they lacked body.

By contrast, the 14" Dark Energy hi-hats were the perfect complement to the rides and crashes in the New Signature series. There were plenty of overtones to provide a meaty sound, but it was still a relatively dry sound with an overall dark character. The chick sound was fat and well defined, and when the hats were played slightly open they produced that nice "sloshy" sound that recalls drummers like Ringo Starr and John Bonham. The open/closed "bark" sound was also meaty but not overpowering.

The 15" Dark Energy hats were a slightly louder and lower-pitched version of the 14" hats. But they were not so loud as to be uncontrollable, so they could still work in a low-volume setting if you prefer a lower pitch.

Conclusion

Paiste boasts of the "musicality" of the Dark Energy line, and I agree. These new models are for players who love the subtlety as well as the dramatic power of cymbals, and who play in situations in which both attributes can be appreciated.

THE NUMBERS

Mark I and Mark II Rides

20"	$518
21"	$568
22"	$620

Mark I Crashes

15"	$322
16"	$368
17"	$420
18"	$452
19"	$484

Mark I Hi-Hats

13"	$528
14"	$588
15"	$644

(800) 472-4783, www.paiste.com.

Head Snare Drums
It's All About The Wood

HITS

shell choices provide acoustic variety

outstanding attention to design details

excellent woodcrafting

MISSES

tension rods on 4½x14 drum "bottomed out"

by Rick Van Horn

Head Drums specializes in handcrafted drums created from a variety of exotic woods. I've had lots of phone conversations with Head's director, Steve Meyer, and I can tell you that he's an absolute fanatic when it comes to the art and science of using various woods, designs, and construction details in order to create the finest possible instruments.

Construction

All Head snare drums feature stave-construction shells. And the staves in each shell aren't just of the same type of wood; they're literally cut from the same *board*. This helps keep the density of the shell uniform for maximum resonance and sustain. In most cases, the staves are "book matched," meaning that they're placed in pairs with the grains mirrored, which provides a nice visual element. And in an important functional detail, the number of staves is always a multiple of the lug count, so that the drum hardware is centered on the stave.

I've reviewed many stave-construction drums, and I've never seen any with shells as thin—only ¼"—as those used on Head drums. According to Steve Meyer, this produces a shell that behaves like a solid-wood shell bored from a log. The staves are arranged vertically, with the grain running from top to bottom. Steve feels that this orientation produces very fast attack, with greater overall loudness than plywood shells. Each shell carries Steve's signature, the manufacturing date, and a serial number.

Details, Details

Head drums are fitted with high-quality steel rims, tube lugs, Nickel Drumworks throw-offs, and Puresound Percussion snares. When it comes to construction quality, I couldn't find a flaw anywhere.

Clockwise from top: 6½x13 Red Padouk, 6½x13 Bird's-Eye Maple, 5½x14 Gabon Ebony, and 4½x14 Alaskan Sitka Spruce

The finishes were beautiful, the shells were round and strong (with no reinforcing rings), and the bearing edges were all true.

Head's logo badges are unique. Instead of a printed name, they feature the profile of (you guessed it) a head, set in a circle.

Acoustic Characteristics

Because of the low mass and uniform density of their shells, Head drums have excellent snare response and sensitivity. As a result, they project ghost notes and soft playing with as much clarity and definition as they do louder strokes. Their resonance and sustain is enhanced by the sharpest bearing edges I've ever seen. Double 45° cuts from the inside and outside create a razor-sharp edge at the center of the shell wall. Drumhead contact is minimized, allowing the heads to respond to stick attack without any of the sound being "tapped off." Speaking of heads, all of our review drums were fitted with Remo coated Ambassador batters and clear Ambassador snare-sides.

As I said earlier, Steve Meyer has spent years exploring the unique properties of wood species from all over the world. His conclusion is that woods with greater density produce more high-frequency content and a sharper attack—like a metal shell, but with the added warmth of real wood.

But enough about general characteristics. Let's check out the individual drums.

4½x14 Alaskan Sitka Spruce

With its light, attractive grain structure, low-gloss natural finish, and chrome hardware, the 4½x14 spruce drum struck me as the "warm puppy" among our group of "show dogs." Rather than making me say "Wow" when I looked at it, it made me say "*Awww.*" The fact that the drum was shallower and much lighter in weight than all the others added to this "cute little fella" impression. But this puppy came with a serious pedigree.

Spruce is a relatively soft wood that's popular for the construction of guitars. It produces a lower fundamental tone than most other woods, along with a very controlled decay. These characteristics gave the spruce snare a warm, mellow, "vintage" sound, which would work well in moderate-volume live situations (especially jazz), as well as for recording.

Even though the drum was shallow, its low fundamental tone gave it a good deal of "fatness" when I tuned it down just a bit. But it didn't lack for attack, especially when I tuned the batter and snare-side heads up a little tighter. At that tuning it also had a nice, Bill Bruford–esque ring to it when played wide open. Rimshots really sang out. A drier sound was easily achieved with just the slightest amount of muffling.

This was my favorite drum among the group, owing to its size and sound. It performed well in all but the very loudest situations where sheer penetrating crack was the primary requirement.

Unfortunately, the spruce drum did have one problem. I was only able to tighten the batter head up to a certain point, because the tension rods "bottomed out" within the tube lugs as the head stretched. When I described this problem to Steve Meyer, he told me that it was most likely the result of faulty tapping in a single batch of lugs, which included those used on our drum. This problem has already been discovered and corrected at the factory. Steve further stated that while no such problem should occur in the future, if it did it would be dealt with under warranty immediately, with no questions asked.

6½x13 Bird's-Eye Maple

Bird's-eye maple is frequently used for the exterior of plywood shells because of its natural beauty. And the Head drum, with its complementary brass hardware, certainly displayed that beauty to great advantage. However, when bird's-eye maple is used to make the whole shell, it also creates an outstanding instrument.

At just above the middle of the wood-density scale, bird's-eye maple is a little harder and brighter-sounding than "standard" maple. So it provides more penetration and sustain, while retaining the warmth and roundness of tone that maple is known for. As such, our review model was the closest to what I'd call a "general purpose" drum, with the most familiar sound. The 6½" depth and 13" diameter gave the drum a very wide tuning range, producing a high-pitched bite when tuned up and a deep, throaty bark when tuned down. Between its sound and its beauty, you could hardly go wrong with this baby in any situation.

6½x13 Red African Padouk

This was one of the real beauties of our review group. The deep red color of the shell was set off by the gleaming chrome of the hardware. And the dimensions of the shell gave an impression of sheer depth and power.

That impression wasn't an illusion. Red African padouk is in the upper range of hardness, so this drum has lots of attack and great sustain, on top of a very wide tuning range. According to Steve Meyer, "In a 6½x13 drum, the depth-to-diameter ratio produces a perfect octave of the head pitch, so no enharmonic overtones are produced." That sounds pretty acoustically high-falutin'. All I can say is, the padouk drum had a richness and fullness beneath its attack, with no unwanted tonalities anywhere. It was definitely a loud drum, but without sounding unmusical or abrasive. And it retained that overall sensitivity that I mentioned earlier, even when played at more moderate volume levels.

5½x14 Gabon Ebony

The 5½x14 ebony drum was the most visually distinctive of our group. With black-chrome hardware on the deep brown/black shell, it had a look that could be considered rich and classy or somewhat sinister, depending on your perspective. Either way, it was a thing of beauty.

Ebony is one of the hardest woods available for drum-building. When it's used in a stave-construction format, its density and reflectivity give a drum an extremely bright attack, as well as tremendous sustain. The ebony Head snare was far and away the loudest of our review drums, with an overall sound that, while I wouldn't call it "warm," was still "woody" and natural.

This is the drum I'd choose when power and projection were of primary importance. However, its reflectivity also gave it extremely sensitive snare response, which means it could also work well for concert applications, and even for brushwork. Its general-purpose size adds to its versatility. According to Steve Meyer, "We've made some 7x14 ebony snares that have incredible tone. But they tend to be a little overpowering for certain styles of music." I don't doubt it.

Conclusion

If you're looking for distinctive sound, excellent performance, and a unique visual appearance in a snare drum, you should definitely add Head drums to your consideration list. Tuning problems with our 4½x14 drum notwithstanding, this manufacturer's attention to detail, quality of craftsmanship, and variety of offerings puts them at the (gulp) *head* of the class.

THE NUMBERS

4½x14 Alaskan Sitka Spruce **$610**
6½x13 Red African Padouk **$610**
6½x13 Bird's-Eye Maple **$672**
5½x14 Gabon Ebony **$711**
(303) 986-5207, www.headdrums.com.

DW 5000 Series Hardware

Performance Without The Price Tag

HITS

high quality at lower prices

no sacrifice in materials

excellent fit and finish

MISSES

hi-hat locking screw could get lost during transport

by Chap Ostrander

Drum Workshop's goal with their new 5000 series is to produce stands that retain the professional features of their heavy-duty 9000 series hardware, but without the weight or cost. To offer even more choices within the line, 5000 series cymbal and hi-hat stands are available in regular and "light" versions. Let's see how they look.

5700 And 5700L Straight/Boom Cymbal Stands

The 5700 boom stand features a hinged adjuster for the boom arm length and position angle. This design allows the tilter to tighten against a large area of the boom arm. The tilting mechanism has a line along the top segment that acts as a reference point for the next time you set up.

The height and angle adjuster on the lighter 5700L stand uses a wingnut that tightens directly against the rod. Other than that, the main difference between the standard and light cymbal stands is that the light model has a single upper tube and a base, while the regular stand employs a base with two upper tubes. Both have memory locks at all points, as well as double-braced legs.

The 5700 stand has a $\frac{1}{2}$" boom arm that's 15" long, a $\frac{3}{4}$" upper tube, a 1" middle tube, and a $1\frac{1}{8}$" base tube. It weighs 10.8 lbs., and its maximum height is 69". The 5700L stand has the same boom arm, a $\frac{3}{4}$" upper tube, and a 1" base tube. It weighs 8.9 lbs., and also has a maximum height of 69". So DW kept the height the same while lightening the stand by almost two pounds. That's significant to me, since, like most working drummers, I move all my own equipment.

5710 And 5710L Straight Cymbal Stands

The two straight cymbal stands sent for review were very straightforward. They both have double-braced legs, integrated memory locks, and fine-tooth tilters. Both stands utilize three tubing sections: a base, a middle tube, and an upper tube with the tilter. This is where the difference in weight lies. The 5710 stand has a $\frac{3}{4}$" upper tube, a 1" middle tube, and a $1\frac{1}{8}$" base tube. Maximum cymbal height is 68", and the weight is 8.7 lbs. The lighter 5710L stand has a $\frac{5}{8}$" upper tube, a $\frac{3}{4}$" middle tube, and a 1" base tube. Maximum cymbal height is 65", and the weight is 7.2 lbs. That's a big difference in weight for such a small change in tubing size. I was very impressed by the look and feel of the 5710L. The lighter stand still said "first class" all the way.

From left: 5700 boom cymbal stand, 5710 straight cymbal stand, 5300 snare stand, 5500TL lightweight Turbo hi-hat, 5700L boom cymbal stand, and 5000 series thrones.

5500TL Lightweight Turbo Hi-Hat Stand

DW already had a 5000 series hi-hat. So they've augmented it with the new 5500TL lightweight model. Its two legs rotate so that you can place extra pedals well within reach. The wingnut adjustment for the angle of the bottom cymbal features a nylon insert that makes the setting smooth and keeps it secure. The overall spring tension adjustment is simple: You loosen a drum key screw and pull the mechanism up with two fingers to adjust the tension.

One of my favorite features on the 5500TL is the folding spring-release footboard. It locks securely against the base while in use, giving a very solid stance to the pedal when combined with the two legs. When it's time to pack up, you loosen two drumkey screws on the bottom of the footboard, and the whole footboard/pedal assembly swings out, slides up, and locks against the base. The cool part is that doing this also releases the tension on the spring—which will, of course, make the spring last longer. The only concern I have is that the lower drumkey screws are basically loose during transport, and they could fall off and float around your trap case until you set up again. I'd rather see them set in nylon fittings or with some kind of liquid thread lock that would keep them from working free.

The upper pull rods are available in two lengths with all 5000 hi-hat models, so you can customize the hi-hat stand for your specific needs. DW's SM379 Locking Clutch is also standard. The 5500TL weighs only 9.2 lbs., accomplished through the use of 1" tubing as opposed to the 1¼" tubing used on the standard-weight 5000. A nicely integrated memory lock completes the picture.

5300 Snare Stand

The 5300 snare stand is very similar to the 9000 series stand, with only minor exceptions. It uses an integrated tube memory lock that looks fine when it's assembled. The stand employs a fine-tooth tilter instead of the TechLock style found on the 9000 series, but it has the same knurled knob underneath to adjust the size of the snare basket. The basket stays with the stand and does not come off for packing.

The base tubing measures 1⅛", which puts it in the middle of the 9000 stand range. The weight of the stand is 8.7 lbs. This is an example of the quality level of the 5000 series. DW left the tubing size alone and achieved their price/weight goals by reducing the bells and whistles.

Conclusion

Perhaps the most striking feature of DW's 5000 series hardware is unseen. You *don't* see the quality of the materials, design, or construction going down for the sake of the price. The 5000 and 9000 lines share the same heavy-duty tubing, double-braced legs, hi-hat bottom cymbal tilters and clutches, Delta Tri-Bearing hinges, and memory locks. You *do* see the 9000 series' toothless tilter with its spring-loaded handle replaced by a tilter with fine teeth for lots of adjustment choices. The line also includes two throne models that we did not receive for review.

DW really did their homework in producing this hardware line, making good choices all around. They found ways to drop the weight and the price while keeping the quality that pros demand and the rest of us all desire. Take the time to check them out. Even without some of the bells and whistles, I still like the music.

THE NUMBERS

5700 boom cymbal stand	$132.99
5700L boom cymbal stand	$ 99.99
5710 straight cymbal stand	$115.99
5710L straight cymbal stand	$ 99.99
5500TL hi-hat stand	$182.99
5300 snare stand	$116.99

(805) 485-6999, www.dwdrums.com.

Quick Looks

Zildjian Armand Ride

The ride cymbal that Zildjian has created in tribute to their late patriarch, Armand Zildjian, is unique on a number of counts. To begin with, its 19" diameter is a rare size in ride cymbals. It's also thinner than most rides today. Its design is based on an A Zildjian ride that was Armand's personal favorite, the one that was on the drumkit in his office at the Zildjian factory for over thirty years.

Zildjian states that the Armand ride has "a bright and musical 'vintage A' sound with focused stick definition, balanced wash, and plenty of sizzle." It certainly was bright (yet warm), with a pleasant, musical sound and a very precise stick-attack that stood out clearly from the underlying wash. And that wash *was* balanced, in that it never built up to overpower the stick sound, even under aggressive playing. The sizzle is provided by three rivets, positioned in a small cluster about 1½" in from the edge of the cymbal. These rivets also make the cymbal responsive to the light touch of brushes.

My only disagreement with Zildjian's description would be about the 'vintage A' part. When I compared the Armand ride to a 1962 20" A medium ride that I own, the new cymbal sounded quite a bit higher and dryer—more contemporary, if you will. I'm not saying that's *bad*; in fact it will probably make the Armand ride more appealing to the ears of drummers today. But given the model's pedigree, I was a bit surprised.

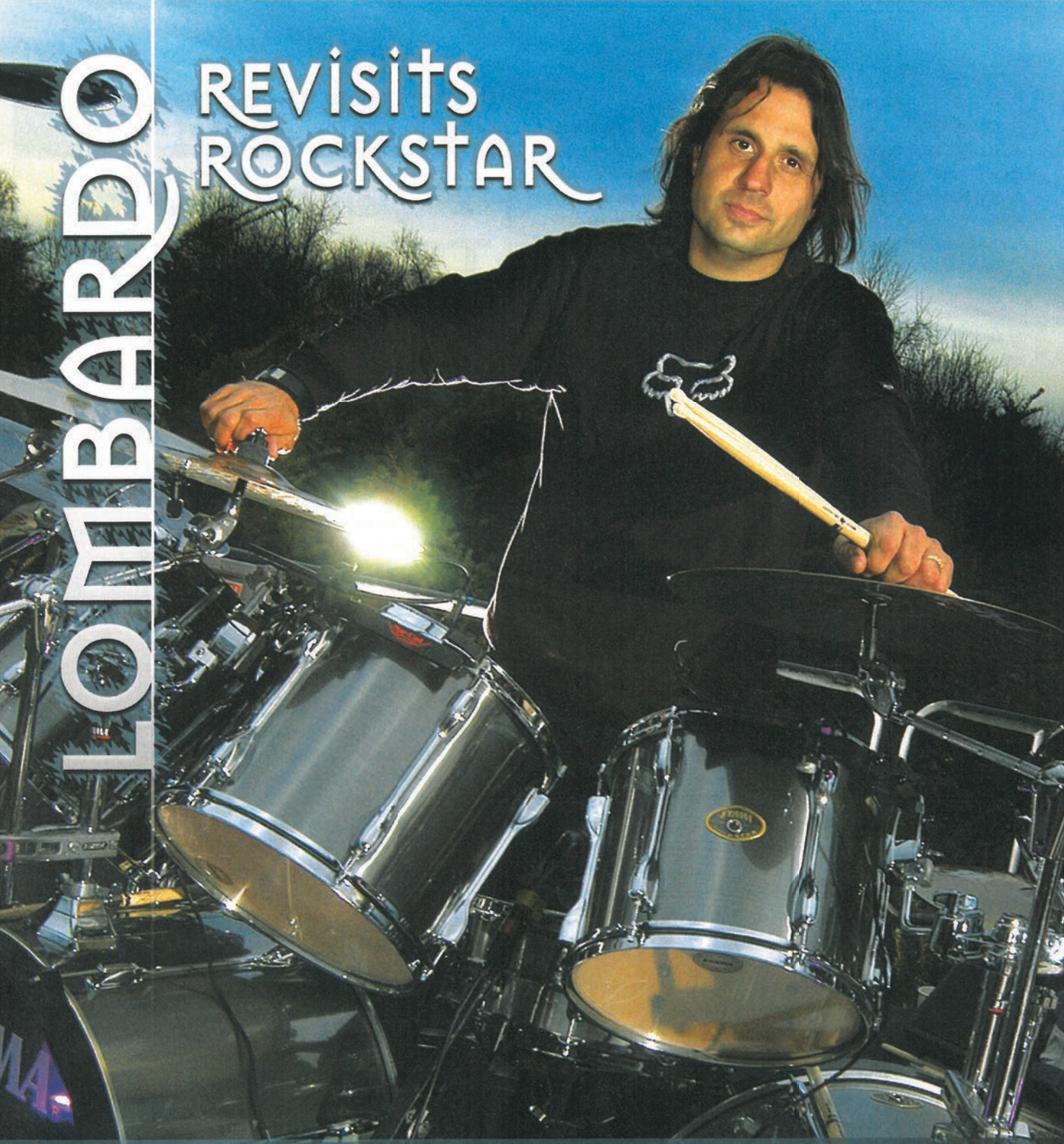
The bell of the Armand ride was another surprise—a very pleasant one. For what is ostensibly a cymbal designed for jazz or other acoustic situations, the bell is clean, resonant, and penetrating.

The power of the bell may be a contributing factor to a certain "gonginess" that occurs when the cymbal is struck on its shoulder with the shank of a stick, or when it's crashed on the edge. Jazz drummers tend to use their ride cymbals in this way, so it's a characteristic to be aware of.

The Armand Ride features its namesake's signature laser-engraved into the surface. It's also stamped with Armand's favorite expression: "Beautiful, Baby." It's an attractive and musically distinctive cymbal likely to find favor with drummers seeking a ride sound that falls between the classic and the contemporary. The limited-edition model is priced at $398.

(781) 871-2200, www.zildjian.com.

Rick Van Horn



Dave Lombardo didn't always play Tama's high-end Starclassics. "In the early '90s, Rockstars were my primary drum," says the man with two of the most amazing feet in the business. "The Rockstars never failed me. They always withstood the beatings."

Recently Dave did a gig for Bam Margera. It wasn't practical to fly in Dave's Starclassic kit, so he played on a small 9 pc Rockstar double bass kit (well, it's small when your regular kit is 11 pcs). We asked Dave after the gig what it was like to revisit Rockstar after so many years. "The drums have maintained their goodness," Dave replied. "They still sound great! But the hardware is so much better. The Roadpro hardware is strong like the old Tama hardware, but it's streamlined so it's a lot lighter. You can lug it around and it doesn't break your back."

"Rockstars still sound phenomenal. I've always played Tama and—whatever I've played on with Tama—the resonance and the craftsmanship is excellent. Everything is worked in perfectly and meticulously, even down to the choice of the little screws inside the shell. I like that. Hands down, Tama drums are the best drums made today."

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(Are your feet as fleet as Dave's? Maybe not? Want to find out how fast? We'll be measuring speed on the *Drumometer® at the *Fastest Feet Contest* at the Tama Booth in the Ozzfest Village of the Damned. The fastest player of the day at each venue will win a prize (Dave is not allowed to compete). For more details visit tama.com

*"Drumometer" is a registered trademark of Alan-McAfee

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Rockstar, Rockstar Custom and Rockstar Custom EFX
Rockstar drums are available in nine different modern covered finishes including the Misty Chrome in the picture with Dave Lombardo (there's only one Misty Chrome, accept no pale substitutes). Rockstar Custom is available in ten lacquer finishes including three fade finishes, Puple pHaze, Custom Caramel Fade, and Custom Mahogany Fade. Tama's new Rockstar Custom EFX is available in two different vintage covered finishes including the Dark Blue Abalone finish featured on the right.

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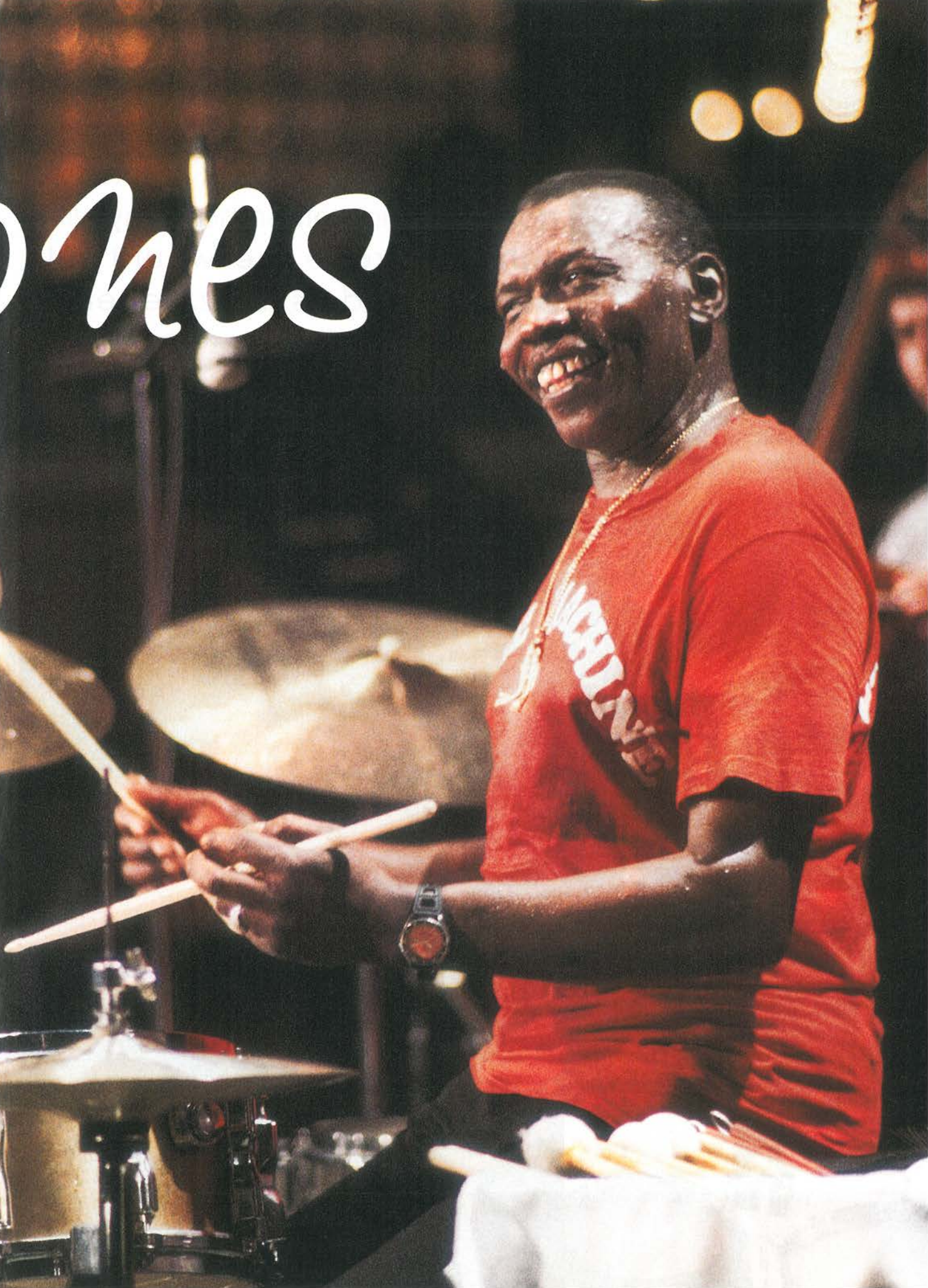
A Tribute To Elvin Jo

by Rick Mattingly

As Elvin Jones walked onto the stage to begin his PASIC 2002 clinic, he was greeted with a standing ovation that lasted for several minutes.

I had witnessed the same thing a few months earlier, when Elvin performed at a jazz festival at the University of Louisville, and various acquaintances have told me of similar ovations that greeted Jones over the past few years at clubs, concerts, and clinics.

Colin Schofield, who got to know Elvin well during the time Colin worked for Zildjian, once remarked to me that in a different type of culture, Elvin would be regarded as a holy man. As I watched Elvin standing solemnly before the cheering PASIC crowd, looking both majestic and humble, I realized that to the percussion and jazz communities, that is exactly the way Elvin Jones was being regarded.



Aldo Mauro

Joost Leijen

Tom Copi

In the days following Elvin's recent death, I read an article that contended that if Jones had never done anything other than play with John Coltrane, he would still be regarded as a jazz legend.

That's probably true, but it doesn't completely explain those ovations Elvin was receiving. Elvin's greatness went far beyond his tenure with Coltrane. Even after leaving Coltrane's group in 1966, Elvin remained a force in modern jazz. Through his own bands he helped nurture the careers of countless musicians, providing them with experience and credibility. For young drummers, Elvin served as a role model, showing by example that the way to maintain a long career was by adhering to high artistic standards and by being an innovator, not an imitator.

His influence extended beyond jazz circles, and many notable rock drummers have expressed their admiration for Elvin in numerous *MD* interviews. The first time I met Elvin, in 1982, he was hanging out with Jaimoe from The Allman Brothers Band at the Professional Percussion Center in New York. The last time I saw him, a few hours after his PASIC 2002 clinic, he was having a spirited conversation with former Mitch Ryder & The Detroit Wheels drummer Johnny "Bee" Badanjek. Keith Moon of The Who used to hang out with Elvin, and original Santana drummer Michael Shrieve was very close to him.

Elvin enjoyed the highest respect of his peers as well. I'll never forget a night at the Village Vanguard when Philly Joe Jones showed up to see Elvin. Between sets, the two sat in the Vanguard's kitchen, talking and laughing like brothers. A couple of years later when Elvin was playing at the Blue Note, through sheer coincidence I ended up sharing a table with Max Roach, who watched Elvin with an expression of sheer delight, leaning over to tell me at one point, "There's only one Elvin."

Indeed, getting to know Elvin helped me realize one of the profound truths about the great musicians—that no amount of transcribing rhythms, pitches, or chord voicings will ever explain their artistry. You can talk all you want about Elvin's polyrhythms, Elvin's independence, Elvin's "rolling and tumbling" triplets, Elvin's power, etc. But what Elvin was *really* playing was his personality. Let's face it, we've all heard drummers imitate the mechanics of Elvin's playing, but have we ever been fooled for even a minute that we were hearing Elvin? Hardly.

Paul La Raia

Elvin On Record

Ten Must-Have Discs

by John Riley

I must own close to a hundred recordings featuring the drumming of Elvin Jones. Occasionally I'll be exposed to a CD that I haven't heard, and that's always a very nice surprise. In my opinion, Elvin never made a bad recording; his playing was so special and his integrity as an artist was so deeply rooted that he was compelled to give 110% in every playing situation. That said, it is somewhat problematic for me to pick my favorites.

I've included in chronological order some of the better-known titles along with a few more obscure dates from Elvin's most prolific period. His more recent recordings with Joe Lovano, Michael Brecker, and Bill Frisell are fantastic too.

1957, Paul Chambers Quintet (Blue Note 52441). A swinging hardbop date. Check out Elvin's burning brush solo on the tune "Four Strings" and his loping cymbal beat throughout.

1960, Coltrane Plays The Blues (Atlantic CD 1382). Recorded two weeks after Elvin joined the band, a must for playing along to in order to master playing slow tempos.

1961, Yusef Lateef, *Into Something* (Prestige OJCCD-700-2). The "eights" and "fours" on "Water Pistol" are priceless.

1963, Coltrane Live At Birdland (Impulse MCAD-33109). I prefer to hear live dates whenever possible. The band is on fire at Birdland. Check out the smoking waltz on "Afro-Blue."

1964, John Coltrane Quartet, *Crescent* (Impulse MCAD-5889). If *Birdland* was on fire, *Crescent* is an intense smolder highlighted by the feature "The Drum Thing."

1964, Wayne Shorter, *Speak No Evil* (Blue Note CDP 7 46509 2). Fantastic compositions brought to life by an all-star band. The hookup between Elvin and Herbie Hancock is extraordinary.

1965, John Coltrane, *Transition* (Impulse GRP 11242). Listen to the support and lift Elvin provides Coltrane on his two solos on "Transition" and the duet "Vigil." They sound like they are of one mind.

1967, McCoy Tyner, The Real McCoy (Blue Note CDP 7 46512 2). Great tunes played as only these masters could: with authority and swing.

1971, Elvin Jones, *Merry Go Round* (Blue Note BST 84414). A great date featuring a larger ensemble including Chick Corea, Jan Hammer, Dave Leibman, Steve Grossman, and others.

1972, Elvin Jones, *Live At The Lighthouse* (Blue Note BN-LA 015-2). The playing is intense and passionate, perhaps Elvin's best date as a leader.

Michael Weintraub

Elvin sometimes seemed to be doing battle with his drumset—thrashing the drums mercilessly, dueling with the cymbals. But he could also, as Adam Nussbaum once observed, play the cymbals so delicately that you would think they were made of crystal rather than metal. And he had this sort of *evil* way of swishing a brush across a drumhead so that it sounded like the hissing of a snake. And those vocal sounds he made—was he singing or cursing under his breath?

Speaking with Elvin was a lot like hearing him play. When he was excited about something, words poured out of him with gusto, like his solos and fills. When he felt deeply about something, he spoke in such a low tone that you often had to lean forward to hear him clearly. But then he would unexpectedly stress a word or phrase with the intensity of a rimshot. He was also famous for setting up a punchline with a delivery so deadpan that you thought he was serious, until laughter suddenly erupted from somewhere deep inside him and his face lit up with a grin that would make you laugh even when you didn't quite understand the joke.

Elvin could be intimidating, to be sure. But anyone who knew him will attest to the warmth and love that poured out of him. Until the past couple of years, his standard way of greeting a friend was by engulfing the person in a bear hug and lifting him off the ground, often accompanied by a kiss on the cheek. One quickly learned to give Elvin a few minutes to dry off and change his shirt after a performance before getting one of those hugs. "Buddy Rich and I went to hear Elvin together in London," Louie Bellson once told me. "After the set, we went back to the dressing room to say hello. As soon as he saw us, Elvin threw his arms around Buddy and picked him up. Elvin was dripping wet, of course, and Buddy was wearing a suede jacket," Louie recalled, laughing. "That jacket was ruined!"

There are so many great Elvin stories, which will continued to be shared whenever people who knew him get together. One of my favorites was told to me by saxophonist Richard Torres, who had been on the Stan Kenton band with Peter Erskine in the early '70s. As Richard and I waited for a Steely Dan concert to begin one night when Peter was touring with the group, he told me of going to see Elvin several years earlier. "I was sitting right in front of the drums," he recalled. "During the first set, one of Elvin's drumsticks broke, so he let the stick fall to the floor and pulled another one out of his stick bag without interrupting the flow of his drumming. When the set ended, I went over to where Elvin was standing behind the drums and said, as politely as I could, 'Excuse me, Mr. Jones. I was wondering if I could have that broken drumstick.' Elvin looked at me with a fierce expression and said 'NO!' I was in shock, thinking that, somehow, I had offended him. But then he reached down and pulled a good stick out of his bag, and with a big, sweet smile he said, 'Take this one.'"

Elvin Ray Jones was born on September 9, 1927, in Pontiac, Michigan, the younger brother of jazz pianist Hank Jones and the late trumpet player and bandleader Thad Jones. Elvin frequently cited the support he received at home. "My family always encouraged me," he said in a 1982 *Modern Drummer* interview. "That's really what you get from your family—moral support. Getting that pat on the back when you know you need it, and *they* know you need it."

His musical siblings gave him a lot of professional guidance as well. "My brother Hank gave me a great lesson one day when he made me play along with an Art Tatum record," Elvin remembered. "You see, there are lessons all around us. If someone really wants to learn how to function on an instrument—how to understand and get some insight into the instrument's capabilities and into one's own approach to the instrument—then influences can come from any source. I don't think it necessarily has to come from someone who has mastered that instrument *per se*.

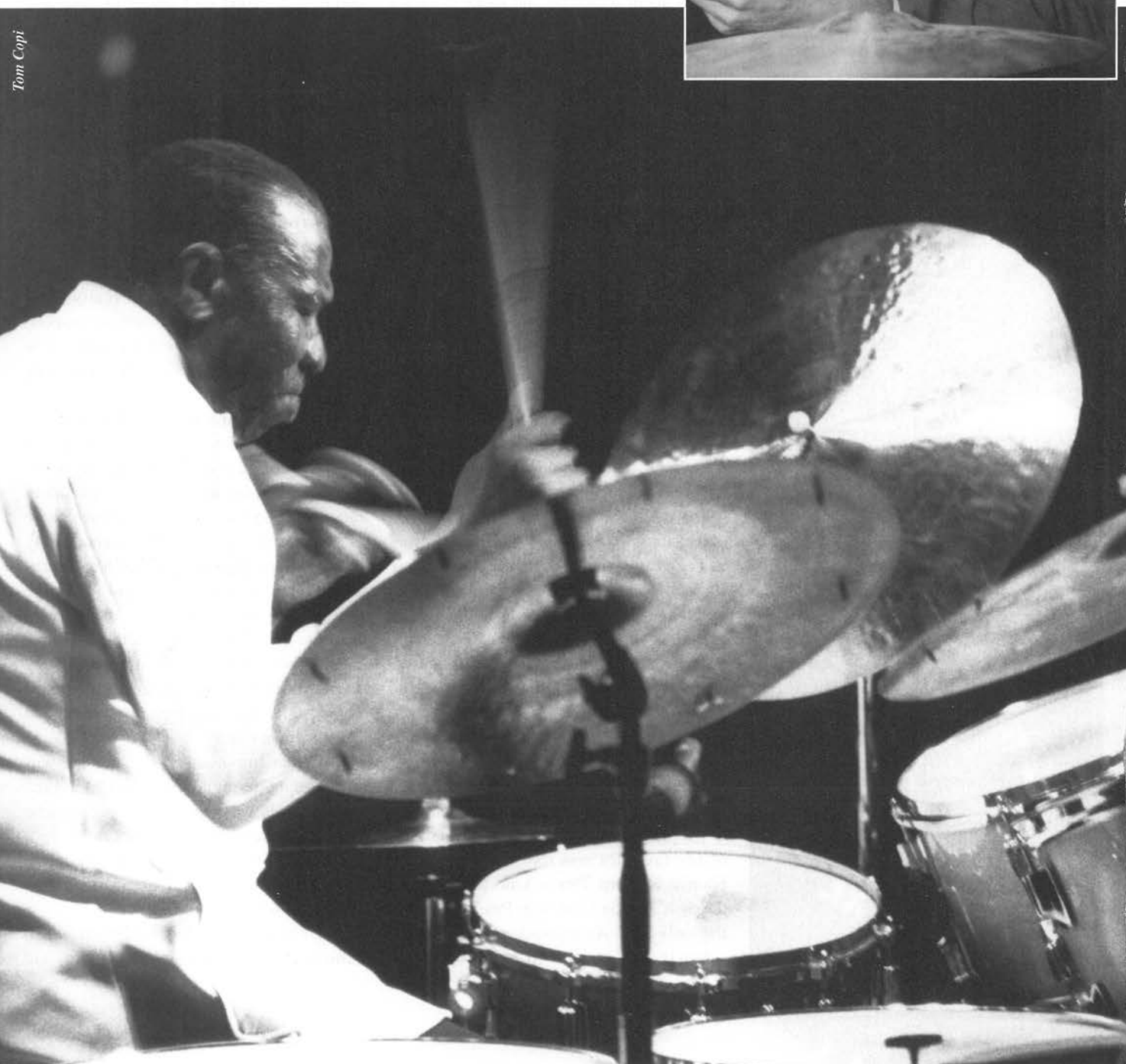
"Another important source for me was my band master in junior high school, Fred N. Weist. He was one of these people who bring out in a student the desire to do well. I thank God that I was fortunate enough to have the experience of being under his influence in my formative years."

After tenth grade, Jones dropped out of school, got a job at General Motors, and

began gigging around Pontiac, sometimes with his brothers, using borrowed drums. At age eighteen he joined the Army and spent the next three years playing in a military band. "I didn't have any problems in the Army band, because I had learned how to march in the high school band, and I liked it," he said. "I loved to play John Philip Sousa marches and listen to that big brass section. We had a concert band as well as a marching band, and it was a fulfilling experience at that point in my life. Fortunately, there were men who had been in the Army band for forty or fifty years, so I had that association with trained musicians."

After being discharged from the Army, Elvin returned to Michigan, acquired his first drumset, and began gigging in Detroit. He quickly developed a good reputation and landed a gig in the house band at the Bluebird Club, which was led by Billy Mitchell. Elvin recalled all-night jam sessions and getting the chance to play with prominent jazz musicians when they appeared in town. During 1955 he toured with bassist Charles Mingus and pianist Bud Powell.

Elvin went to New York City in 1956 to audition for the Benny Goodman band. He didn't get the gig, but he stayed in New York and



Tom Copi

Elvin's Memoirs

by Michael Shrieve

On the afternoon of March 8, 1966, I went to Stanford University to hear The John Coltrane Quartet. As a huge jazz fan and an aspiring fifteen-year-old drummer growing up in the San Francisco Bay Area, I was excited beyond words to finally see and hear my favorite drummer in person, Elvin Jones. The only problem was I had no money, so I had to find a way to sneak into the concert. (I had snuck into many concerts before, and this, I figured, would be no different.)

Well, I did sneak in, but somehow I ended up coming through the ceiling of the men's dressing room at the concert hall! It was one embarrassed kid that let himself down into the room where Jimmy Garrison and Elvin Jones were changing into their tuxedos for the performance. Fortunately for me, these two men had a remarkable sense of humor, and I believe they even admired my determination just a little bit. In fact, Jimmy Garrison graciously invited me to come to their performance later that night at the Jazz Workshop in San Francisco.

In front of Mr. Jones, I was a bumbling idiot, I am sure. But Elvin was kind and encouraging to me. He said, "I hope you enjoy the performance, and maybe we'll see you later at the Jazz Workshop."

Their performance was incredible, like no music I had ever experienced before. It was beyond my facilities to comprehend the sheer force and power of Elvin's playing. And he seemed to be so connected to John Coltrane that the two of them were in another place altogether. I have not been the same since.

It happened that, over the years, I was fortunate enough to become very close friends with Elvin and his wife, Keiko. He told me many stories that I found to be informative and, at times, very funny. One time, in passing, I mentioned to Elvin that he should write a book and tell these stories. And then, with those big eyes and that incredible smile he had—the same one I had encountered in the dressing room at Stanford University forty years earlier—Elvin looked at me and said, "Well, why don't *you* do it?"

This is one of those stories, in Elvin's own words.

My Favorite Things came out, and it took off like a *rocket*. That record changed the entire industry because it was being played on the radio, and people were listening. Instead of having to go to a nightclub, you could turn on the radio and hear it. All the deejays were playing this music! It was great. It was good for all of us—for everybody that played music and the whole industry—and it brought a high level of recognition to the group. People never imagined that this could be music that many people could enjoy. Music had been stereotyped in such a way that people had very low expectations of the possibilities of this art form. But that record changed that train of thought, that way of thinking.

After *My Favorite Things* came out, the clubs filled up. People came to listen. They wanted to see us; they wanted to experience it in person. The audiences increased tremendously everywhere we'd go. After that, it was easier. Club owners were more willing to say, "All right, I want the group in for two weeks...I want the group for this concert and this festival." It was a big boost to our morale. I don't think I made any more money; we were still driving cross-country in a car. That didn't change. We weren't buying airplane tickets. But when people respond to what you're doing in a positive way, when they genuinely and sincerely appreciate it and like what it is that you're doing, that motivates you more and more.

The next time we went into the studio, we knew that we were not just recording. We knew we were recording a *performance*, and that made a great difference. Now we knew we had an audience, and we could play to that audience and record to that audience. I think we all felt that. It wasn't that now this guy's famous and that I'm a great drummer. I never thought that. Never. I always know what I'm capable of, but I thought there must be a hundred guys who play better than I do.

I never thought I was a great drummer. I know I'm good, but nothing exceptional. I thought of myself as a craftsman who was in a very fortunate situation, and enjoying it. I don't think I was ever happier than when Coltrane was playing saxophone, McCoy was playing piano, and Jimmy Garrison was playing bass. That's the formula for happiness for me.

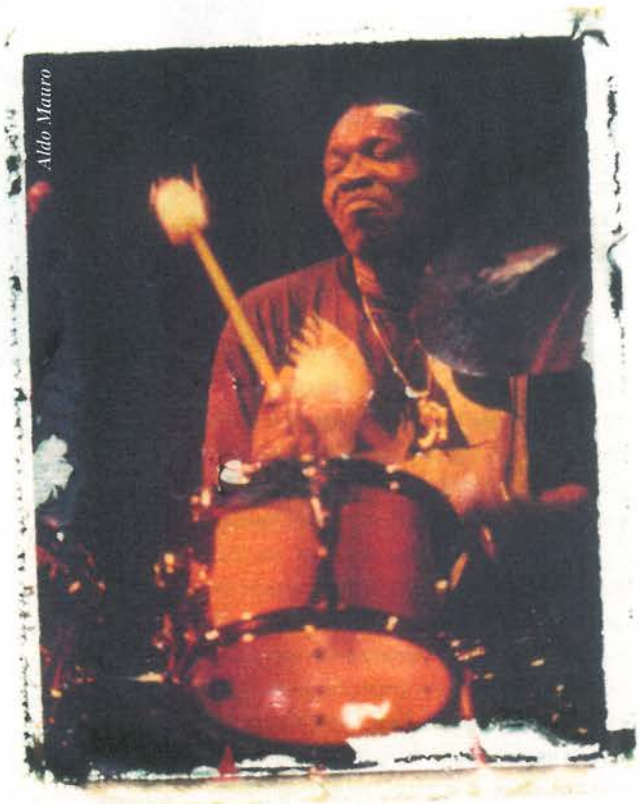
I always equated what Coltrane did with what any of the master musicians of the past centuries have done. The music transcended the mirror of what we consider our art form of the United States. It's more international than anything. Although the origins are here, it reaches far beyond any of the things that are normally considered "American" music. The recordings are on par with any of the other master compositions or master recordings that are available. We can listen to all the great operas and all the great symphonies, so why not Coltrane? It's pretty natural, I think. It's music of humanity, in that sense.

John never said a word, not one word. When he would leave the stage and go in the back, he would start practicing. That in itself would tell us that he was getting ready for the next one, because he felt good about it. He was such a religious man, and so spiritual. There were times when he was playing that he would get so involved, so intense, that he would actually drop to his knees as if he was praying, in an attitude of prayer. His horn would be just wringing wet with sweat—just dripping.

I saw John play for three hours once without stopping. It was at a matinee performance at a club in Philadelphia. The whole matinee was one piece, and John stayed on it for three hours and I was right behind him. McCoy dropped out, Jimmy dropped out. [laughs] When we were finished I said, "What are we going to play next?" And John asked, "Oh, the matinee's over?" I hadn't realized the time had passed either. I was waiting for a chance to solo! Yeah, that was a lot of fun.

Editor's note: The previous excerpt is from a forthcoming book of Elvin Jones memoirs written with Michael Shrieve called Elvin Jones And The Rhythm Of Humanity. ●

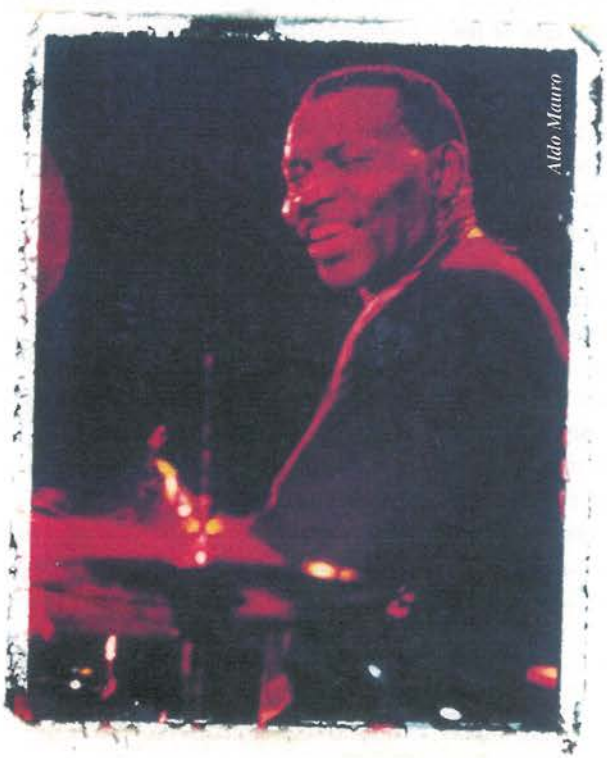
was soon gigging and recording with a variety of artists, including J.J. Johnson, Donald Byrd, Tyree Glenn, Harry "Sweets" Edison, Miles Davis, Paul Chambers, Pepper Adams, and Stan Getz. This was also the time when the "Beat Generation" poets often read their works and improvised poems over jazz backgrounds, and Elvin backed poets Kenneth Rexroth, Jack Kerouac, and Allen Ginsberg.



One of Elvin's most significant recordings during this period was with Sonny Rollins, on an album titled *Live At The Village Vanguard*. Ironically, Elvin wasn't actually working with Rollins at the time; he was just sitting in at the invitation of bassist Wilbur Ware.

That recording remains an important document of Elvin's emerging style. The timekeeping is fairly traditional bop drumming, but when Jones and Rollins trade fours on "Sonnymoon For Two," many of the characteristics of Elvin's later style emerge, such as the thunderous tom rolls, the use of polyrhythms, a dramatic sense of color, and a dose of bombast. You also hear Jones and Rollins dispense with metric accuracy as they overlap phrases in the style of a true musical conversation.

"To me, that was a great release," Elvin explained. "The only time I was able to play with that kind of expression prior to that was when I worked with Bud Powell. When exchanging fours or eights, I was always thinking in terms of musical phrasing as far as the composition was concerned. I think the phrasing should never be confined to a rigid pattern. Why shouldn't it overlap? If everyone is paying attention, it shouldn't make any difference. You can simply pick up from where the other person left off, and he can come in where he wants in order to complete the continuity of the phrase. You can't play that way all the time; it depends on the artist. But playing with more expression was certainly appropriate with an artist like Sonny Rollins and an exceptional bass player like Wilbur Ware. In a situation like that, there are no restrictions. You can apply your technique and skill in the way you want, because that really is the way to express oneself—within the context of the composition, naturally."



One of the stories that has been passed around among musicians for years involves someone coming up to Elvin after a performance and saying, "Mr. Jones, I was trying to count the bars when you were trading fours, and it seemed like some of them had extra beats." To which Jones replied, "Some fours take longer than others."

The Rollins recording helped validate Elvin's emerging style, which some musicians at the time criticized. In the documentary film *A Different Drummer: Elvin Jones*, Elvin comments that when he first began his career, the word was out that he was hard to play with because of his unorthodox style. But Elvin remained positive—and practical.

"It's hard for a young person when you feel that what you're doing is correct, but you're not fully accepted," Elvin told me in 1982. "I'm sure, though, that Monk and Miles and everybody else who ever had new ideas has had the same experience. So this was simply my turn to have that experience. But then, I wasn't stupid either. On some gigs, believe me, you just play it the way the bandleader calls it and leave it at that. Don't try to fight the system. Go ahead and make your union scale and tomorrow's another day. Look at it that way, which isn't compromising; it's simply that you're being sensible—you're being realistic.

"I don't mean to say that it was that much of a struggle," he quickly added. "There was a lot of very exciting music being played then, and there were also a lot of people listening to the music and identifying with it. So I think there's a great strength in that kind of support.

"I knew I was doing the right thing. I also knew that it sounded complicated,

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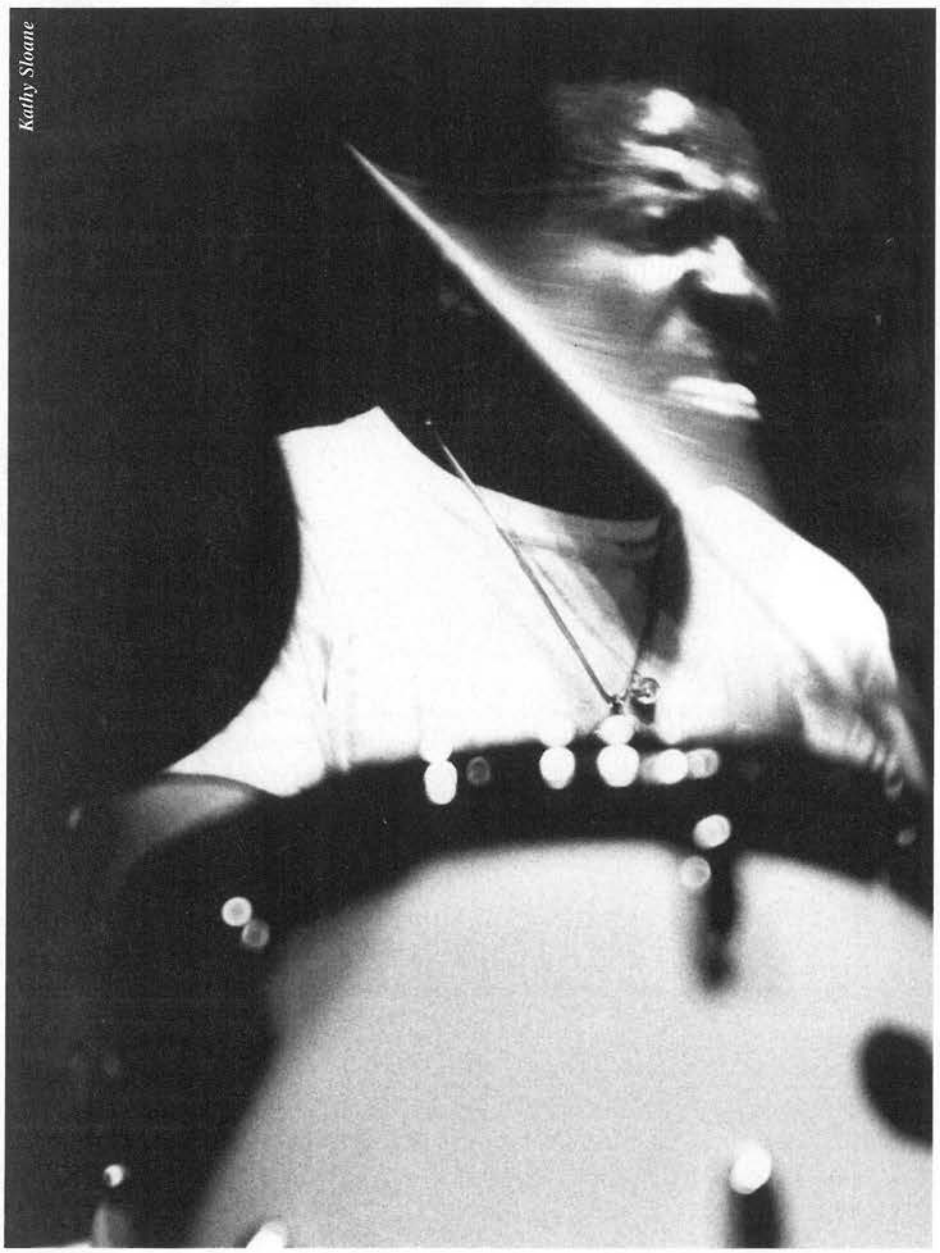
but it was only an appearance of complication—it wasn't really. It wasn't status quo, so to speak, but I didn't feel that it was all that different. I grew up with the old methods and learned them, and then I had to reject them. Not really reject, but rather I chose to use the parts of them that suited me, which isn't exactly a rejection. I think it's an improvement. It adds more responsibility to the drummer, but it also offers greater opportunities. When approached properly, it broadens the musical scope of the player. And it has to be musical; it can't be an ego trip—something used to show off someone's personal achievement. It's an addition to the responsibility that drummers have to eventually accept.

"One of the responsibilities involves being flexible enough to support the soloist within the full range of support. You won't be just following the soloist, but rather, you will become a partner. It didn't seem logical to me that the music we were playing could be approached in any other way."

In 1960, Elvin joined The John Coltrane Quartet. It was the perfect setting for his style, and Elvin and "Trane" were truly partners as they simultaneously explored rhythm and melody. "I think we all have some innate knowledge of what we would like to do, and we have some idea of our abilities," Elvin commented in 1992. "But you can't realize that until the opportunity arises where you can apply your ideas, or where it can be pulled out of you, even if you're not consciously aware of it. In that band, there was some of both, and I will forever be grateful that it happened to me."


Kathy Sloane

Jones developed an original approach in which every part of the drumset contributed to the forward momentum of the music. "You can't isolate the different parts of the drumset any more than you can isolate your left leg from the rest of your body," Elvin contended. "Your body is one, even though you have two legs, two arms, ten fingers, and all of that. All of those parts add up to one human being. It's the same with the instrument. People are never going to approach the drumset correctly if they don't start thinking of it as a single musical instrument.

"Perhaps a good comparison would be the way some arrangers can blend everything together so that no matter how many instruments are in the band or orchestra, you will find yourself hearing everything without consciously trying to do so, because it's been so skillfully done that the music comes to you as a total experience. This is the same principle that drummers have to use in their concept of the instrument. No matter how many components, it can certainly be played as a single instrument and blended with any combination of instruments.

"The drumset as we know it now has only been in existence since about the early '30s. This is a relatively new art form that we are involved with. And it's an American art form, I might add. Some people might argue about that, but that's what I believe, and I'll live with that. So anyway, I think that people who intend to learn how to play this instrument have to start regarding it for what it is. Until then, they're never going to be able to listen to it properly; they won't be able to hear the total picture."

Through his use of multiple layers of rhythm, Jones helped free the music from the boxlike structure imposed by barlines, paving the way for a more modern style of jazz that flowed more freely. "Elvin brought a form of relaxation to the music," says saxophonist Pat La Barbera, who played with Jones frequently over the past twenty-five years. "When I worked with Buddy Rich, everything had that real heavy swing feel, which I enjoy playing with sometimes. But Elvin really loosened up the time, and when I played with him, the music felt so open."

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Photo: Jimmy Katz Expressions: Peter Erskine

He represented everything that was good and great about jazz and life.

ELVIN JONES

(1927 - 2004)

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Elvin Jones

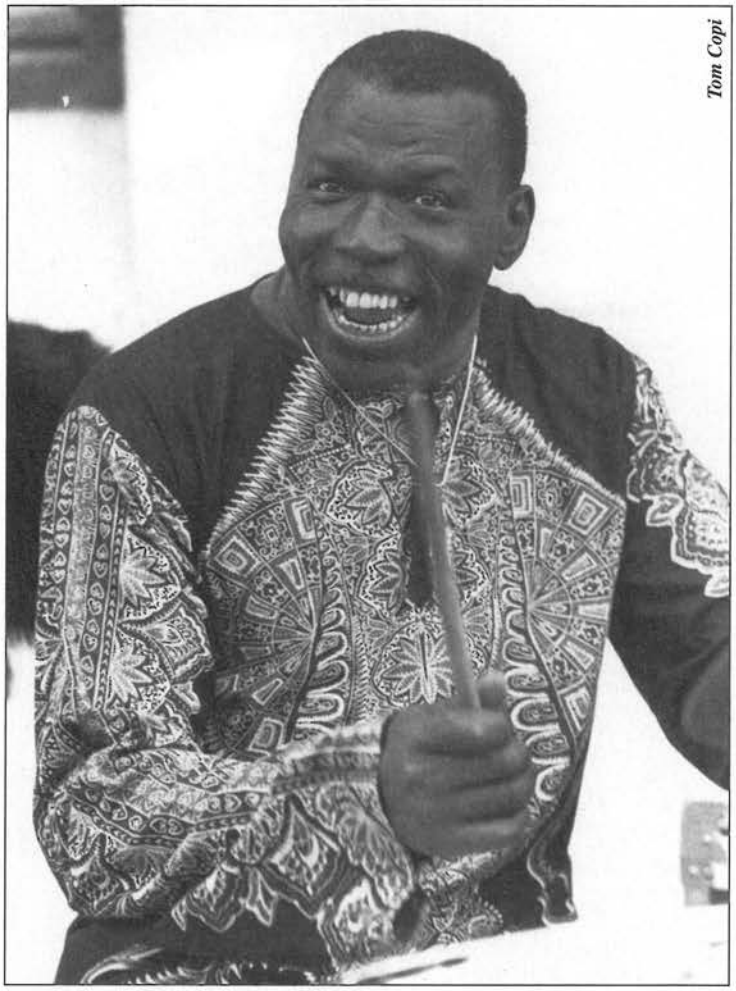
Jones recorded extensively with Coltrane, and many consider the album *A Love Supreme* to be the definitive document of the group that included pianist McCoy Tyner and bassist Jimmy Garrison. "We only made one take on that piece," Elvin recalled in 1992. "In one sense, it seemed that we played for an hour, and in another sense it seemed as if it were two or three minutes. It was timeless in that regard. Even when I listen to it now, I lose the sense of the passage of time. I'm completely submerged in the music.

"That album was the culmination of a great many things for all of us," he added. "It wasn't the end of what we did, but the end of a particular train of thought. It's difficult to verbalize it, because sometimes words just don't express what occurs. I haven't yet heard anyone describe what that album is in absolute technical, musical terms. The rules hadn't been written yet about how to apply that kind of technique to modern harmony. John was playing one set of variations, McCoy was playing another, Jimmy was playing another, and I was playing a rhythmic counterpoint to what they were doing."

Another significant Coltrane recording is *Ascension*, on which the Coltrane quartet was augmented by several other musicians, including trumpeter Freddie Hubbard and saxophonists Archie Shepp and Pharoah Sanders. The album consists of a single, forty-minute piece, during which Elvin propels the time in every way imaginable. Sometimes the music sounds very organized, with fairly traditional timekeeping coming from the drumset. Other times it sounds like a musical free-for-all, with accents exploding from the drums at random, but still with a sense of forward momentum. At other times, pulsating rolls push the music forward.

"Recording this music was a tremendous experience," Elvin said. "You felt like you were in a laboratory, watching someone put the theories of a great mathematician into practice. Here, we were putting into practice the theories of a great artist whose conception came to this point in time. Fortunately, we were there to support that.

"I can never get away from that word 'support,'" Elvin stressed. "It's important that drummers understand what support really means and how significant it is in dealing with artistic endeavor. One should be flexible enough to go with it. It isn't something to fight. It's not a contest. One has to *contribute*. Be conscious of the kind of support that is needed so you can apply it."


Tom Copi

During his years with Coltrane, Elvin—who had once been considered difficult to play with—became an in-demand drummer who appeared on countless jazz albums by such artists as Grant Green, Wayne Shorter, Joe Henderson, Freddie Hubbard, Larry Young, Kenny Burrell, and Rahsaan Roland Kirk. Jones also recorded several albums under his own name during that period.

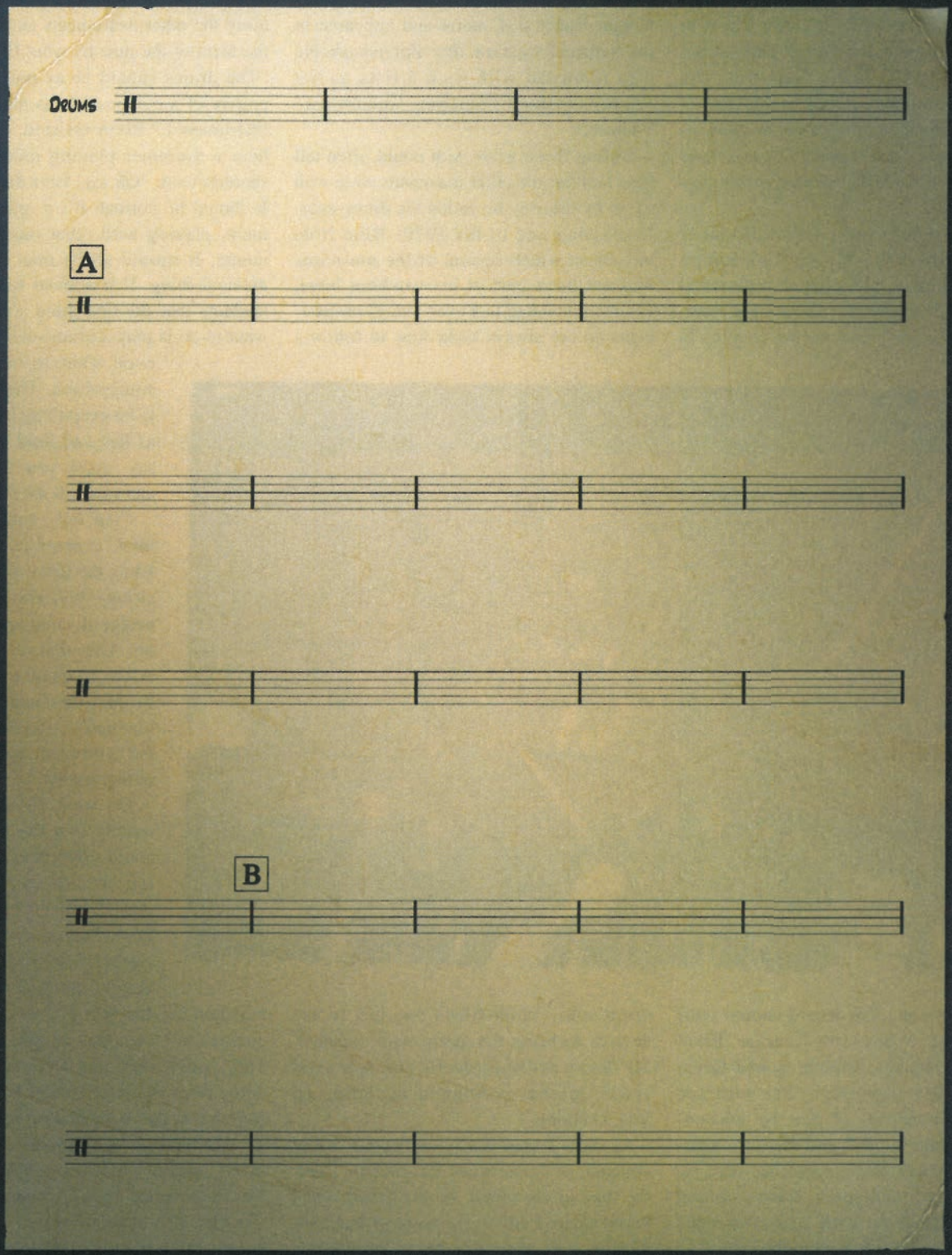
Coltrane gradually began to expand his group and added a second drummer, Rashied Ali, late in 1965. Elvin played alongside Ali briefly, but then left Coltrane's group early in 1966. About a year and a half later, Coltrane died. In his 1982 *MD* interview, Elvin speculated that, had Coltrane lived, they would have played together again. "He didn't approach me and say in so many words that this was what he had in mind," Elvin said. "But he used to come by and listen to my group quite regularly. We never lost touch with each other."

Elvin always expressed gratitude for the time he spent with Coltrane. "If a group of people stay together and grow together for a protracted period of time, you stimulate each other and feed each other," he explained. "Providing that you've got the right people and the chemistry works, it can be extremely creative, as was The Coltrane Quartet. That was an ideal group.

"Of course, you have to be willing to make a few sacrifices to stay together. It's almost like a marriage. You make a commitment to your colleagues just as you make a commitment to your music. You want to develop yourself; you want to pursue this career; you want to pursue the knowledge of the instrument. There are many ways of doing it. But the best way, I think, is with someone whom you are congenial with; whom you can play with; whom you can experience musical opportunities with. All these things have tremendous value.

"Even when you leave it, you don't really leave anything, because you take all of that experience with you. And if there are ten of you, that means that ten people have shared that experience and they can go in ten different directions and utilize that knowledge and spread it out to that many more people. So it's perpetual; it never ends. People can still benefit from the experiences I had with Coltrane."

After leaving Coltrane, Elvin spent two



A moment of silence for Elvin Jones, 1927–2004.

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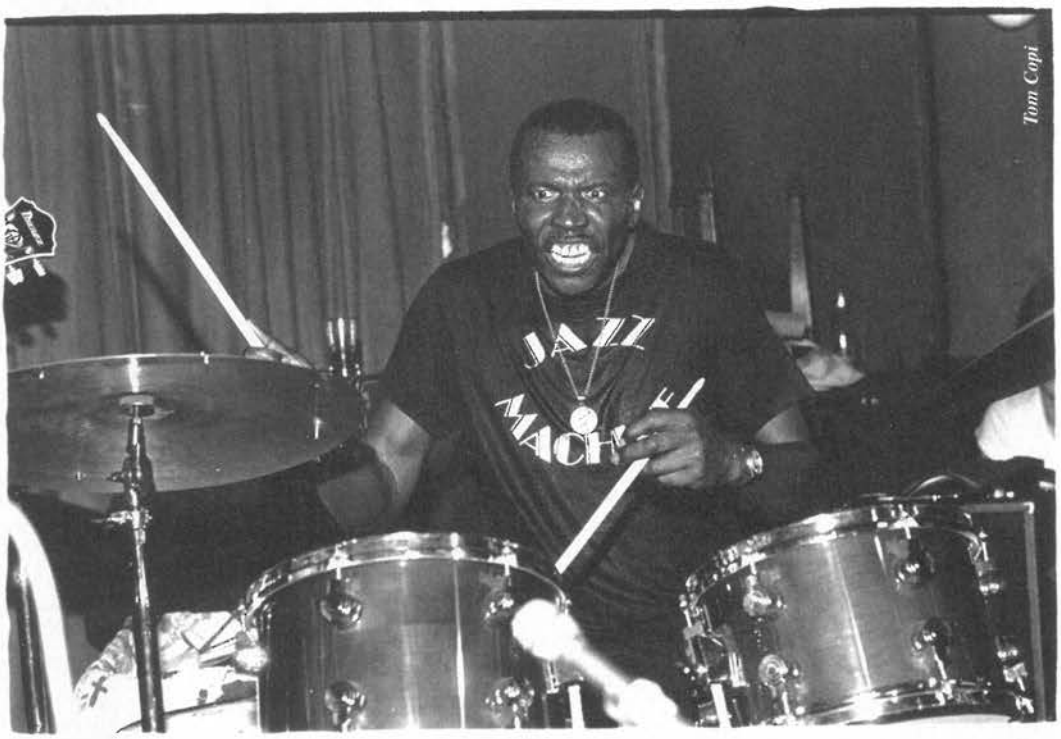
weeks touring Europe with Duke Ellington's orchestra. He then spent some time in Paris subbing for Kenny Clarke at the Blue Note club. When he returned to the States, Elvin started his own trio with saxophonist/flutist Joe Farrell and former Coltrane bassist Jimmy Garrison. The group's debut album, *Puttin' It Together* on the Blue Note label, is regarded by many as one of Elvin's finest recordings ever, and Elvin himself ranked it as one of his personal favorites.

A significant tune on that album is "Keiko's Birthday March," on which Elvin's swinging, syncopated, rudimental introduction recalls his Army band days. The title also reflected a new chapter in Elvin's life—one that would endure until the very end. While with Coltrane, Elvin had met a Japanese woman named Keiko who initially impressed him with her extensive knowledge of jazz. He encountered her again in 1966, and they were married a year later. She became his manager and constant companion, wrote several tunes that Elvin recorded, and even tuned Elvin's drums before every performance.



Over the next few years, Jones' bands included such musicians as saxophonists Dave Liebman, Frank Foster, Steve Grossman, and George Coleman, trumpeters Hannibal Peterson and Lew Soloff, pianists Chick Corea and Jan Hammer, and bassists Wilbur Little and Gene Perla. He participated in a well-publicized "drum battle" with former Cream drummer Ginger Baker in London and appeared in the satirical western film *Zachariah*. He also recorded with such artists as Art Pepper, Tommy Flanagan, and Bennie Wallace.

During those years, you could often tell how familiar the other musicians were with Elvin by the way he ended his drum solos. Discussing one of his 1970s Blue Note albums in which several of the musicians had not been part of his working band, Elvin commented that even excellent musicians do not always know how to follow a drum solo. "Sometimes one has to use devices to bring the group back together. My device at that particular time was a roll and a vigorous nodding of the head," he said, laughing.

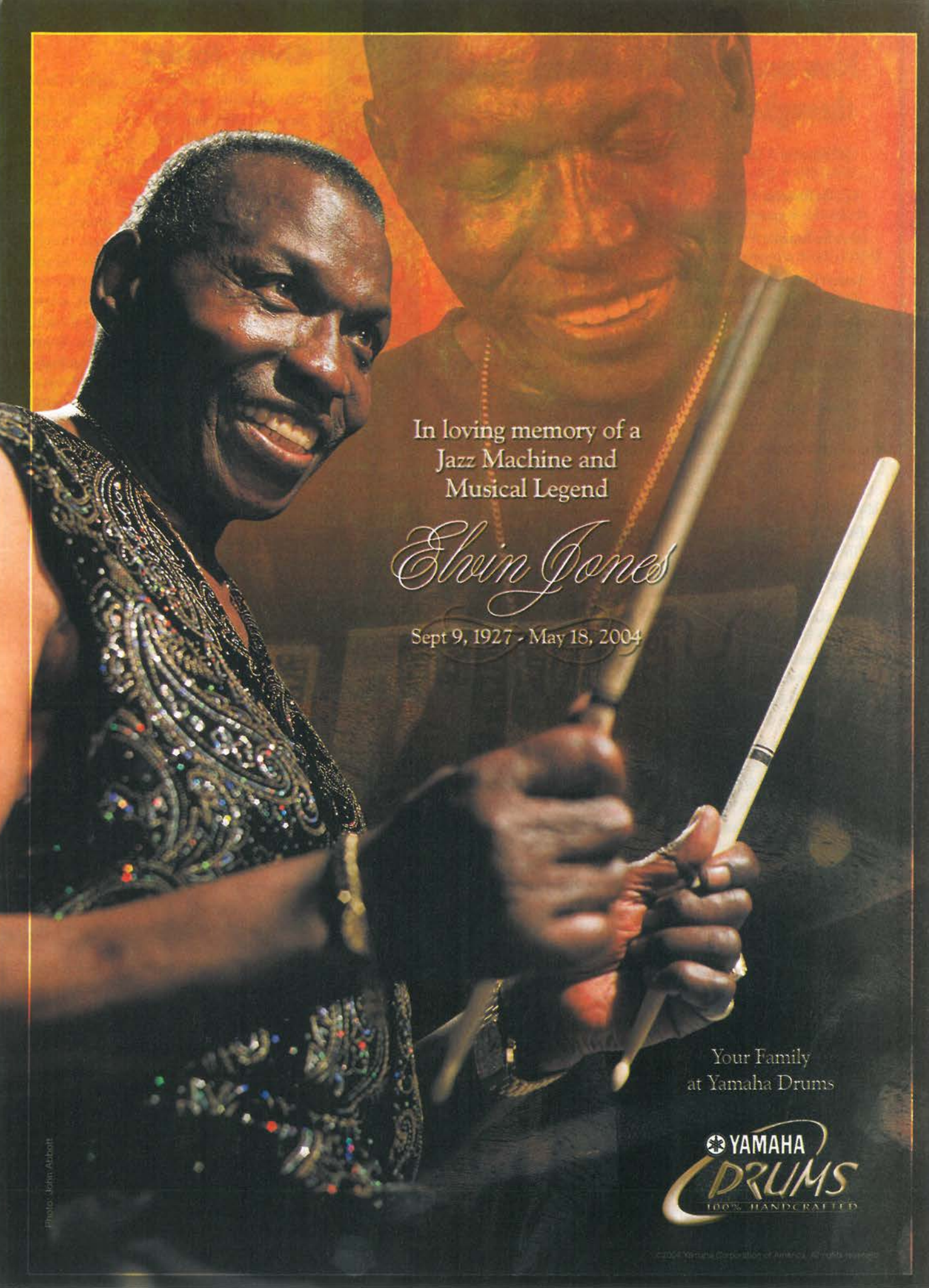
In fact, Jones always adhered to the structure of a tune while he soloed. "I hear the tune in my mind," he explained, "so I know where I am at any point in the composition. Of course, this has to be reflected in what the solo is stating, whether it be realistic or abstract, in tempo or out of tempo. It doesn't matter, as long as the time frame is accurate. Then one can pick up from any portion of the composition and reestablish the continuity."

Elvin was also, obviously, very aware of the compositional form when backing soloists. In many cases you could take away the other instruments and still follow the form of the tune by what Elvin played. "The drums should be as musically supportive of a composition as the rest of the instruments," Elvin insisted. "When you hear a drummer playing musically, you shouldn't say, 'Oh my! Isn't that unusual?' It should be normal. It's a musical instrument, playing with other musical instruments. It should all be one, big, happy, musical thing. I've noticed with my own students that the first thing some of them want to do is play a drum solo. They don't even want to base it on a composition. They just want to hit everything in sight, play as fast and loud as possible, say 'thank you,' take a bow, and walk off the stage.

"The only guideline that I think is practical is that you know the form of the composition—you know when the bridge is coming up, and so on. After that, it's enough to allow yourself to be guided by the soloist and follow your instinctive understanding of the instrument in the support of that soloist."

On some recordings, and usually in a live setting, you could often hear Elvin making vocal sounds as he played. "When I learned how to read music, I didn't have a teacher," Elvin explained. "I bought the Paul Yoder book one morning, and when I first looked at it, I couldn't tell what was an 8th, what was a 16th, and so on, and I couldn't tell the notes from the rests. When I finally realized that some of them were rests, I would hit the notes and go 'uuuhh' on the rests. Now, I sort of grunt out certain accents of the melodies or ends of phrases or things like that. I've gotten chastised a lot for that by my brother Hank. He's always saying, 'What the hell are you *grunting* for? Shut up!'"

In the early 1980s Elvin started calling his group The Jazz Machine. For a couple of years his regular working quartet included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Elvin Jones

saxophonist Pat La Barbera, guitarist Jean Paul Bourelly, and bassist Chip Jackson. Between 1985 and 1989, Elvin and Keiko spent most of their time in Japan, where they ran a restaurant and jazz club. In 1990, Elvin made New York his home base again, and over the next several years Jazz Machine members included saxophonists Pat La Barbera, Joshua Redman, Sonny Fortune, and Ravi Coltrane, pianist Kenny Kirkland, bassists Reggie Workman, George Mraz, and Andy McCloud, trumpeters Wallace Roney and Nicholas Payton, and trombonist Delfeayo Marsalis. Elvin continued to be in-demand for recordings, and appeared on albums by Wynton Marsalis, Marcus Roberts, John Hicks, David Murray, Sonny Sharrock, John McLaughlin, and Joe Lovano. One of his last recordings was with his brother Hank on an album titled *Autumn Leaves* under the name The Great Jazz Trio.

In 1991 Elvin was elected to the Percussive Arts Society Hall of Fame. In 1998, Jones was one of the inaugural recipients of the American Drummers Achievement Award presented by the Zildjian company. Elvin remained active until a few months before his death on May 18.

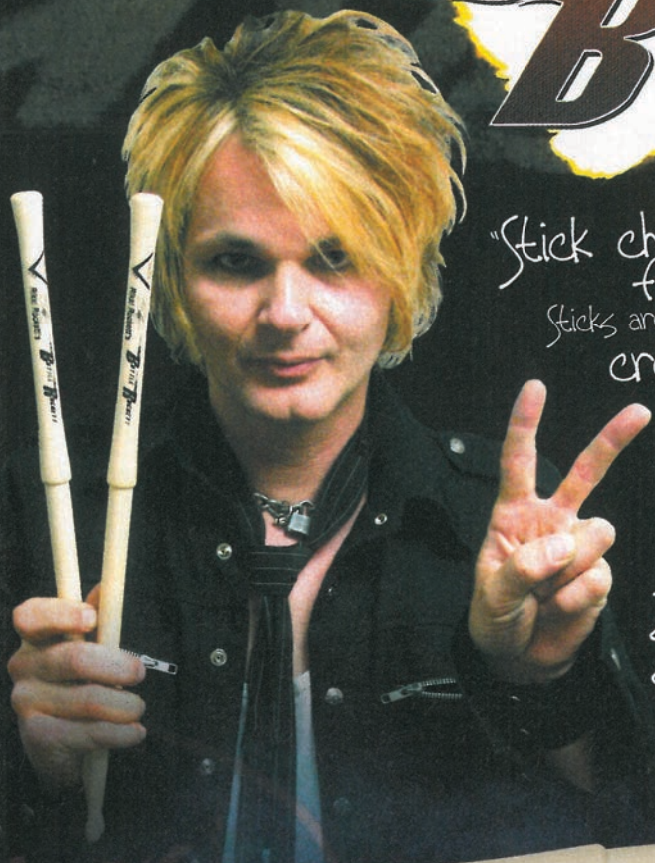
It is especially difficult to accept the fact that Elvin Jones has died, because he was always *so* alive. He was a man of passion in every respect, whether happy or sad, joyful or angry.

Elvin's drumming is preserved on countless classic recordings and will live on forever. But what so many of us who were privileged to know him will miss the most is his laughter. It wasn't just the way his face lit up or that incredible sound he made when he laughed. Like everything else about Elvin, his laughter came from his soul.

The only other person I've ever met in the percussion community whose enthusiasm for life matched Elvin's was the late Armand Zildjian. And whenever Armand and Elvin got together, you'd *really* hear some wall-shaking laughter.

God shared Elvin with us for seventy-six years, and I can't blame Him for wanting Elvin back. I'll bet heaven is filled with laughter right now, and the next time I hear rolling thunder coming from the sky, I'll know that Elvin passed on the harp and got behind the drums.

Rikki Rockett's BOTTLE ROCKETT



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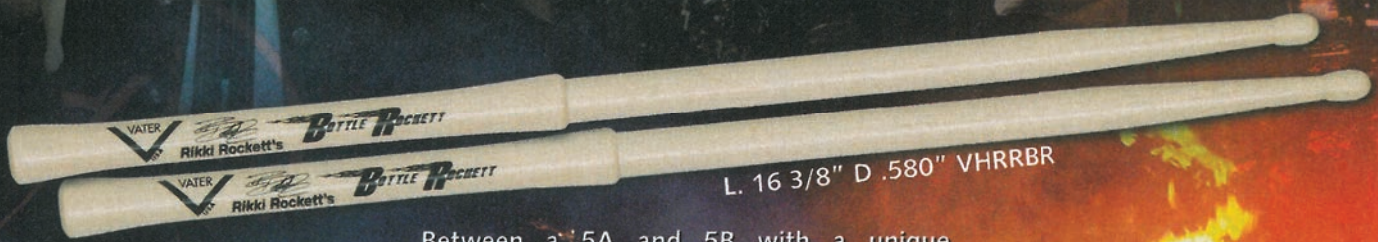

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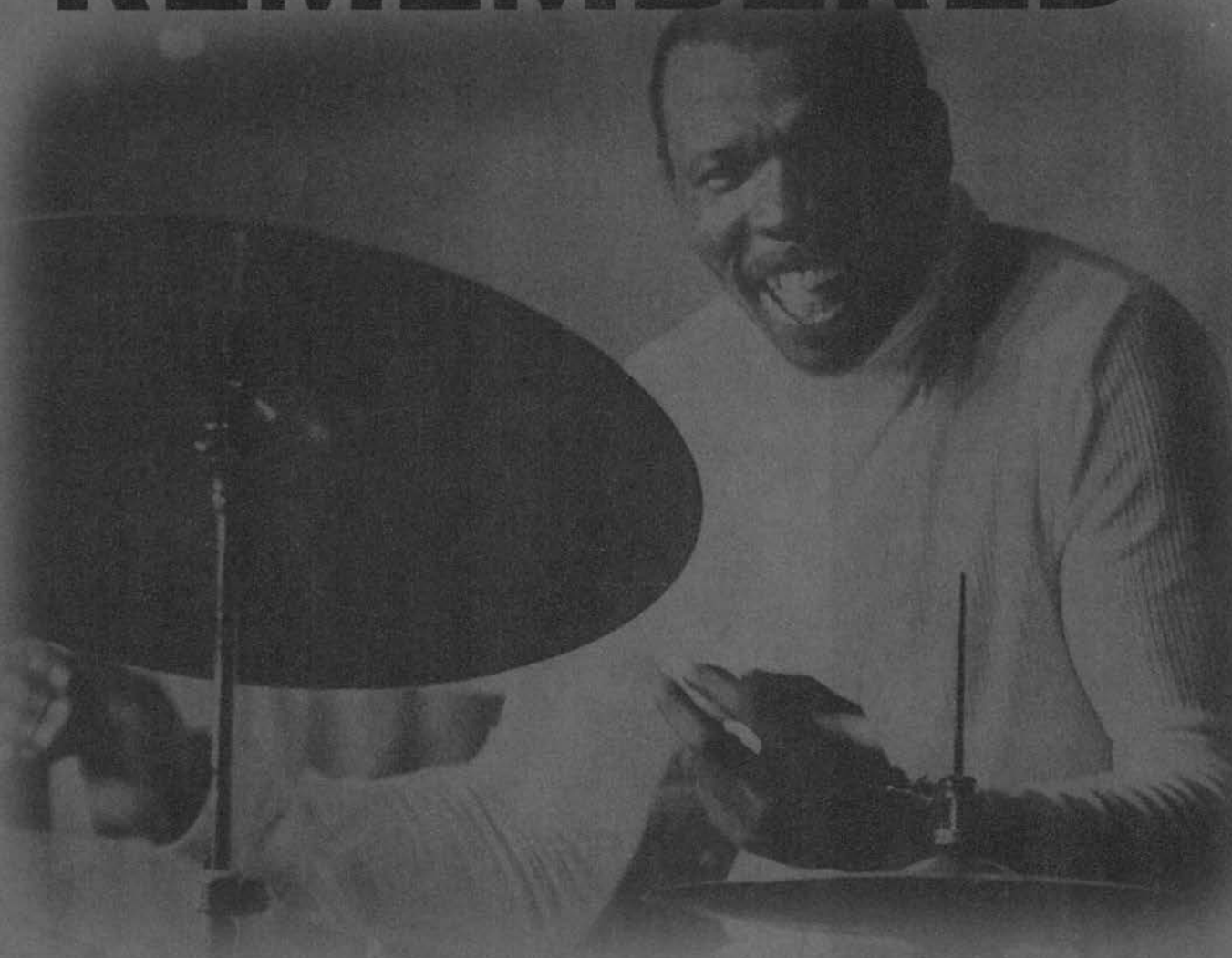
While gathering quotes for this tribute, I recalled when John Riley and I conducted the last Elvin Jones *MD* cover story back in 2002. Elvin and his wife, Keiko, opened their Upper West Side apartment to us, offering tea as we took our seats. Their home was filled with mementos of Elvin's career and travels. Fine art covered the walls, and fragile porcelain figurines gleamed in display cases. Later, Elvin would take us downstairs to their second apartment, where he kept his drums, cymbals, and wardrobe.

Elvin was dressed in a bright blue dashiki, and his beaming smile and regal countenance were matched by a bear-like handshake and his jovial yet relaxed demeanor. Here was a king who knew how to make you feel right at home. Elvin answered questions candidly and often with great wit, but it was only later, when I transcribed the interview tape, that I understood just how clever and at times cagey he had been. He answered some questions giving only the information he *wanted* to give, keeping certain facts to himself. But his charm and intellect were so great that I didn't realize then that he was running the show, not us.

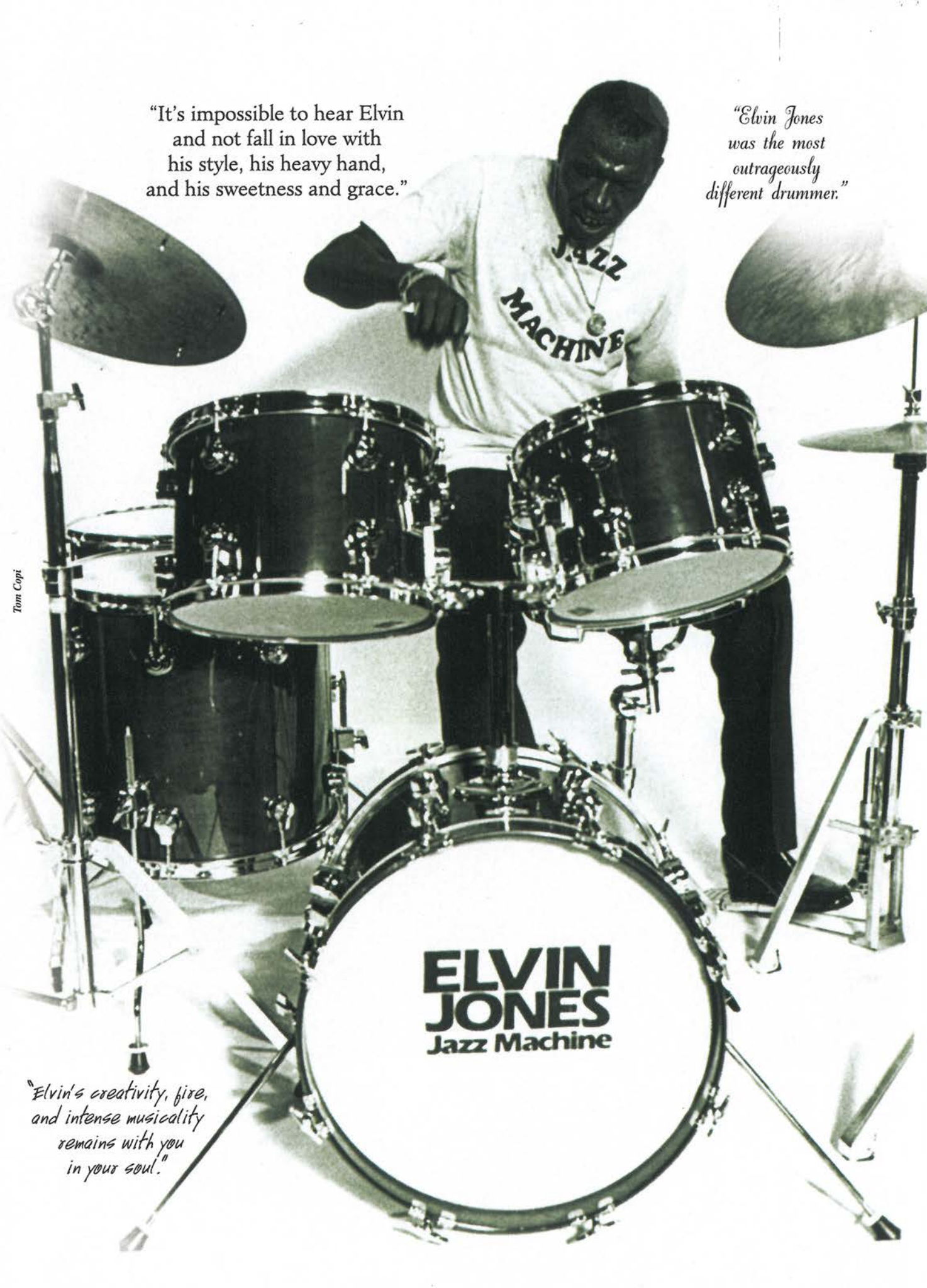
After the interview, Elvin laughed and told stories. I asked him how he stayed in such great physical shape. Without dropping a beat he replied, "I smoke a lot of cigars and drink a lot of sake!" Long live the king.

Ken Micallef

ELVIN REMEMBERED



Reflections On A King


"It's impossible to hear Elvin and not fall in love with his style, his heavy hand, and his sweetness and grace."
"Elvin Jones was the most outrageously different drummer."
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Jazz Machine
"Elvin's creativity, fire, and intense musicality remains with you in your soul."

Tom Copi

The first time I saw Elvin was when I arrived in Detroit to play a gig back in 1952. Hank Jones told his brother Elvin to pick me up at the train station and help me with my drums. It was August, and it was 90°. Elvin drove a black Buick, he had some corn liquor in the glove compartment, and he wanted me to have some with him. I didn't drink at that time, but I did have some with him.

The last time we saw each other was at Zildjian Day [Zildjians' American Drummer Achievement Award celebration for Steve Gadd]. They sent a limo to pick up Elvin, Louie Bellson, and me. When we were in the car riding to the venue, I told Elvin I had just played in St. Paul and that on the first night I realized that I didn't have any of my signature drumsticks. Someone took me to a drum store, but they didn't have any Roy Haynes models. However, they did have two pairs of Elvin Jones sticks, which I used that night. Well, those drumsticks kicked my ass! They were longer than mine. I told Elvin that and he laughed hard. That was the last time I saw him. We were very close from the time we met.

Roy Haynes
(jazz legend)

I have a beautiful postcard photo of Elvin that sits between my speakers. I see it every day. His amazing face and posture are as inspiring as is his music. The first time I ever heard Elvin play was on an album by J.J. Johnson called *Dial J.J.* His playing then was more rooted in the Max Roach school, but you can clearly hear that he was already pulsating in a different way.

There are so many great records Elvin is a part of, and one that I used to listen to intensely before I left for a gig is *Motion* by Lee Konitz. I saw him play live with Trane on their first trip to LA in 1961, and I was never the same again. Neither was anyone else who was there that night. I was looking right up at his drums; it was so awesome and forceful."

Jim Keltner
(studio great)

It's impossible to hear Elvin and not fall in love with his style, his heavy hand, and his sweetness and grace. The night he passed I played a solo and realized that virtually everything I played wouldn't have been possible without his contribution to jazz drumming. How amazing! Most people dream of having even a small fraction of that kind of originality or influence in their contribution to the world of music and beyond.

Elvin was our ambassador, our general, our chief, our wise man, our medicine man, and our friend. He will be more than missed and is immortalized with the honor of saints and icons and other men or women of authentic greatness. I can only encourage us to celebrate his life and his art, which I'm sure is the way he would want it.

Terri Lyne Carrington
(Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter)

Elvin was the first real influence on my jazz drumming. It was a blessing to have the privilege to play with him when I was living in San Juan, Puerto Rico in 1970. He was really encouraging when I told him I wanted to move to New

I once saw Elvin choosing some cymbals at the original K Zildjian factory in Istanbul, Turkey. I was used to seeing drummers grab cymbals and play on them, always with some lack of focus. But Elvin focused on one cymbal and played a slow two-handed single-stroke roll near the edge—he made the cymbal *roar*. And when you thought he might stop, he just kept going until the entire building seemed to be shaking, smiling the entire time and concentrating. Man, it was *loud*.

When Elvin deemed that the cymbal was warmed-up enough, he began to play time on it. By that point he was sweating profusely. Meanwhile, I swear I could hear the entire John Coltrane Quartet playing at that moment, even though it was only Elvin and that ride cymbal. Elvin knew what sound he wanted, and he unearthed it in that cymbal.

Peter Erskine
(Weather Report, Elvis Costello, jazz great)

Elvin Remembered

York to play with "the cats." Elvin was very humble and full of joy. I'm going to miss him a lot.

Alex Acuña

(Weather Report, LA studio drummer/percussionist)

Elvin started where musical notation finished. He lived in the cracks between the notes. He showed us that there was more to drumming than keeping a beat; he had more to do with the wind and the waves than numbers and click tracks. His music could be ambiguous, messy even. It could sprawl across the barline, but it could also be neat as a pin. No matter whether Elvin found Coltrane, or Coltrane found him, theirs was one of the great enduring partnerships of twentieth century music, up there with Stravinsky and Diaghilev or Lennon and McCartney. After Elvin, they broke the mold.

Bill Bruford

(Earthworks, King Crimson, Yes)

What do you say about a king? Elvin Jones' music was such a reflection of who he was as a person, a man who truly lived his life and experienced the spectrum of human emotion fully and deeply. His strong life force came through his playing and was a dynamic expression of that rhythm of life. He translated that vital heartbeat of humanity as he heard it so that when he played you couldn't help but feel the joy. A remarkable man, a remarkable gift. Thank you, Elvin!

Mike Clark

(Headhunters, funk and jazz great)

Seeing Elvin play live for the first time was life-changing for me. His playing was so organic, musical, and truly original. We have lost one of the true masters of the instrument. And on top of that, he was a very gracious man—a true gentleman. I will miss that smile and laugh of his.

Keith Carlock

(Sting, Steely Dan)

Elvin Jones was a true innovator in every sense of the word. He was so inspirational and soulful, and hearing him live was always uplifting. I made it a point to hear him whenever I could. The way he combined power and subtlety was masterful.

A few years ago, I had the pleasure of playing alongside him in a two-drummer tribute to Art Blakey at Lincoln Center. I had to keep pinching myself to make sure it was really happening! We were playing Bobby Timmons' classic "Moanin'." Of course, I couldn't take my eyes and ears off of him the whole time. Elvin was awesome.

Lewis Nash

(jazz great)

When I was growing up in Mexico City I tried to dissect what Elvin was doing, but it was way over my head. It *still* is. Drums would never be the same after Elvin's presence was felt in the music world. The influence he's had on drummers compares to the influence Coltrane had on saxophone players: People are still trying to figure out how they could be so ahead of their time. Elvin's sound is timeless, and we should all thank him for the legacy he left us.

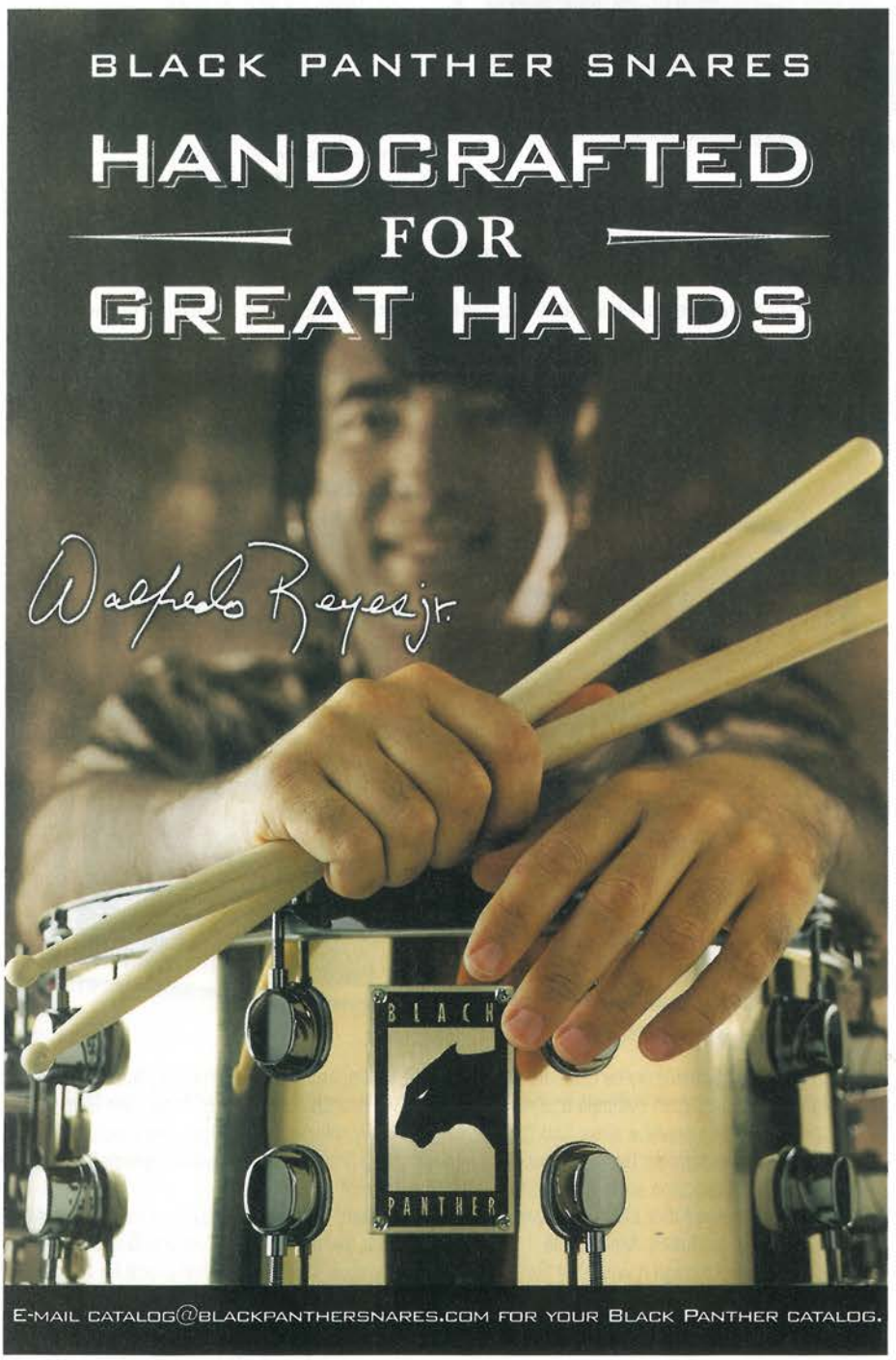
Antonio Sanchez

(Pat Metheny)

While I was watching Elvin's set at JazzFest two years ago, his wife, Keiko, was berating the soundman: "Move it lower, move it lower." Once they realized she was talking about the overhead mic', they moved it down two feet, and, instantly, Elvin's sound became more present. With the sound dialed in, she began jumping and yelling with glee and joy like it was the first time she'd ever seen him play. Keiko's display of love and dedication to Elvin moved me.

Stanton Moore

(Galactic)



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Elvin Remembered

I don't think any words are appropriate. Elvin was a great human being who played the drums as only he could, making an impact on all who experienced his music. He will be missed terribly and remembered dearly.

Dave Weckl
(Chick Corea, solo artist)

I worked at Frank Ippolito's drum shop in New York in 1971, when Elvin taught there. All of the drummers used to come in. Our main technician, Al Duffy, had a lot of knowledge about drums. At the time, Elvin was breaking his bass drum strap every night. (He had the tension on the pedal set as tight as it would go.) Elvin and Billy Cobham, who also taught there at the time, came to Al with the concept for a chain-drive pedal. People don't know that Elvin was one of the main drummers who inspired it.

Paul Kimbarow
(Sha Na Na)

I was on tour with Don Pullen around 1995, and we opened for Elvin in Europe. When Don did records, he didn't let me play on the brush songs because my technique was really bad. One night during that tour, Elvin, Don, and I were at the bar. Don said to Elvin, "J.T.'s brush work is really sad." Elvin looked at me with that big smile of his and said, "You got your stick bag?" I handed it to him, he pulled out my brushes, and then he started playing right on top of the bar—these beautiful ballad strokes. He said to me, "See, you got it? It's like a soufflé. No bubbles." Elvin let me stand over him on tour and watch him. He was so supportive. On the next Don Pullen album, I played all the brush songs."

J.T. Lewis
(Tina Turner, Kip Hanrahan)

When I was sixteen, I heard Elvin Jones with Coltrane, McCoy Tyner, and Jimmy Garrison. My life has not been the same since. Nine years later, when I recorded percussion on Frank Foster's album *The Loud Minority* in New York, Elvin was playing drums. I still remember the feeling of freedom and security that I felt then. As for Elvin's passing, well, everything will pass, but we are a spirit and we'll never die.

Airto Moreira
(Miles Davis, Weather Report)

Elvin is one of my few drum heroes. Listening to him and playing along to his recorded performances were a part of my lessons. I still listen to Elvin regularly. I'd heard it said that he was "larger than life." I had the impression that he was very tall, maybe 6'3". When we met I was shocked, because he was a little shorter than me. But his vibe was enormous. Elvin had so much personality, and he was so friendly and warm. From then on, he was 9' tall.

David Garibaldi
(Tower Of Power)

Elvin was the pulse of my generation of musicians. Whenever I had the privilege of hearing him play, I always came away thinking that being a drummer was the noblest profession of all. With his passing, we'll all have to try a little harder.

Joe La Barbera
(Bill Evans, Woody Herman)

Elvin Jones had the deepest, most swingin' feel of any drummer who ever lived. His approach touched me profoundly, and his influence is firmly embedded in my playing—and in that of *many*

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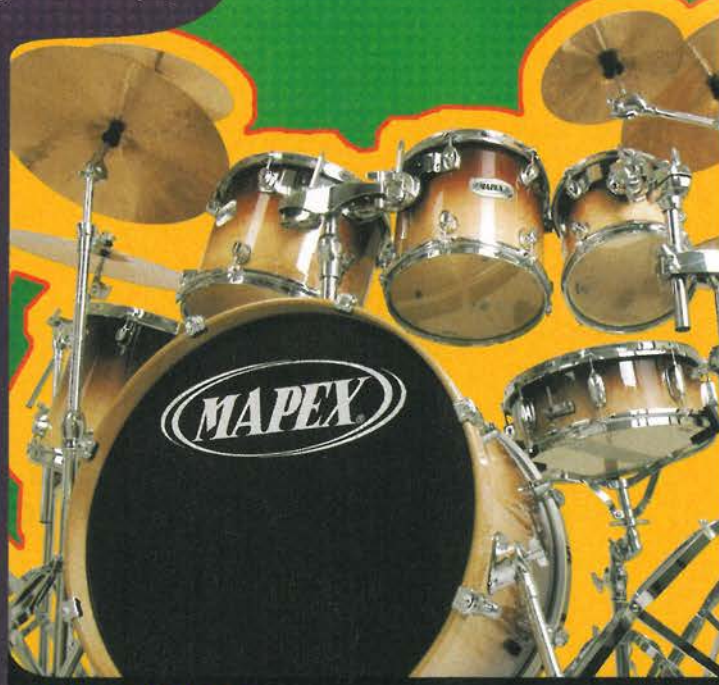

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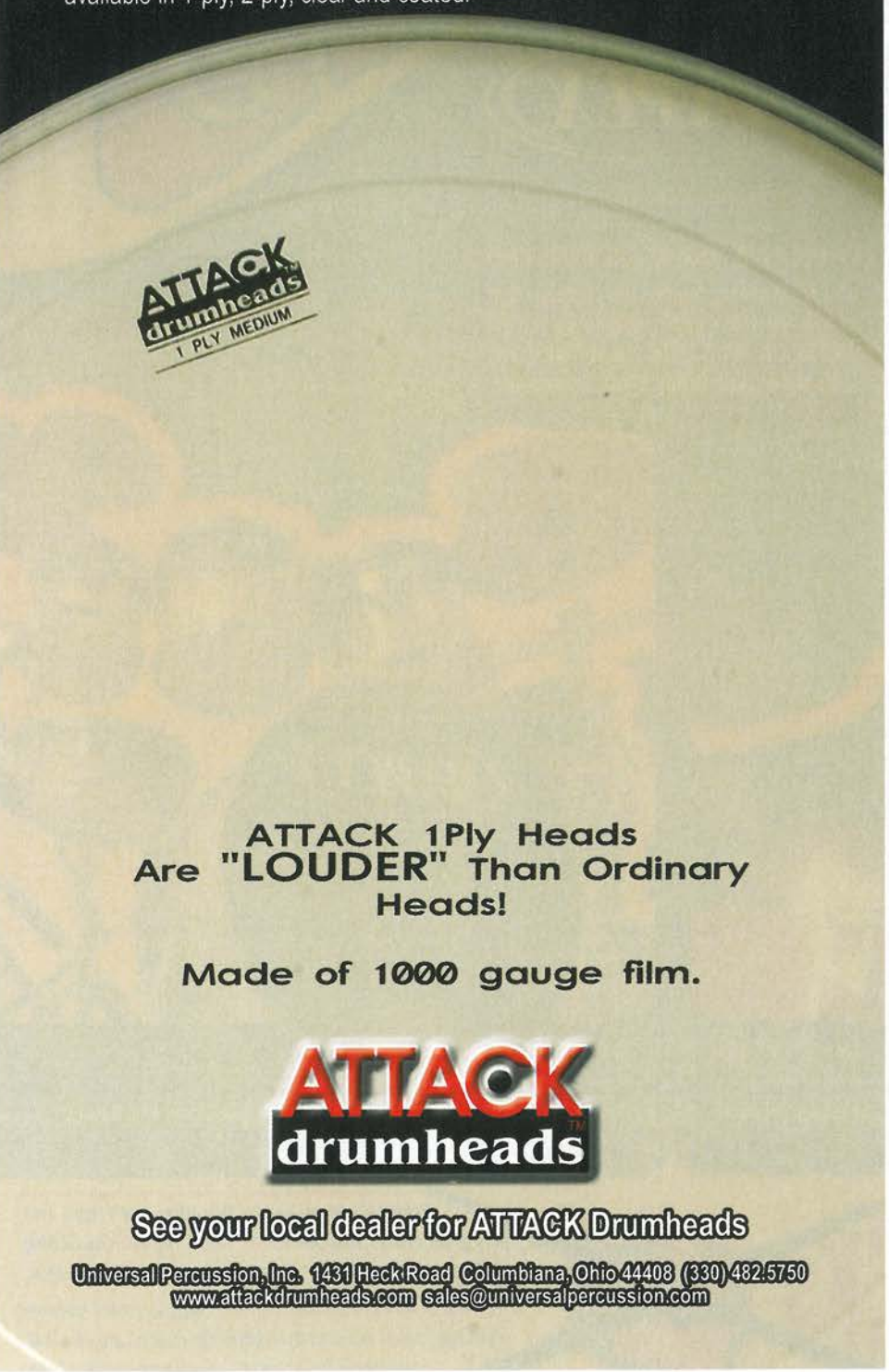

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Elvin Remembered

other drummers. Elvin lived a long, rich life and affected the lives of countless people in a positive way. He will truly live on in the hearts and playing of us all.

Steve Smith
(Vital Information, Journey)

I feel very fortunate to live in the same time as Elvin Jones and to have seen him play many times. His musical spirit was incredibly powerful, and his playing evolved to a surreal level of individualism, while somehow always blending with other musicians of diverse styles in harmonious, supportive ways. He lived an incredible life.

Bill Stewart
(John Scofield, Joe Lovano)

We all share this great loss of such a personable giant in the human community. But while I'm saddened, I also rejoice in the fact that Elvin is immortal because he will live in every musician who has heard or will hear his playing. As he once said, "When you can't feel anything else, you can feel the drums." It was a great privilege to know Elvin. I will always "feel" him.

Lenny White
(Miles Davis, Return To Forever)

Elvin Jones was a very special human being—a creator of a unique and undeniable style of drumming because of his distinctive technique, power, and finesse. He explored new ideas in drumming like a space ship reaching out into the universe.

As a kid in high school, I loved Elvin Jones' playing, spirit, and vibe so much that I would play along to the John Coltrane albums *A Love Supreme* and *Giant Steps* every day. I never sounded like Elvin, of course, but I tried as hard as I could. This became a very important part of my development as a drummer.

Kenny Aronoff
(John Mellencamp, Michelle Branch, studio great)

Not only did Elvin revolutionize drumming, he also spoke about the times. You could hear it in the way he played. So to me, Elvin the man and Elvin the drummer were one and the same—precious. I hope he is at peace.

Greg Hutchinson
(Ray Brown, Joshua Redman, Dianne Reeves)

I've been listening to Elvin on record and seeing him play live since 1962. He will always remain my greatest influence in jazz drumming and in

drumming period. In my opinion, he was one of the deepest drummers who ever played this instrument and that will never change. I also just loved him for the person he was.

Peter Magadini
(Don Menza, Jim Galloway, author)

Elvin Jones was one of those blessed few individuals who was so tapped into that special deep spiritual zone that we all strive to ultimately attain. It was as though he was a conduit for the life force of all humanity.

I first met Elvin when I was fifteen, and I was in total awe. But he instantly put me at ease and we developed a friendship. Over the years, he was always encouraging to me. Elvin was one of my fathers. His spirit will live on forever.

Adam Nussbaum
(John Abercrombie, Toots Thielemans, Michael Brecker)

Elvin's music affects me in ways that I cannot verbalize without sounding trite and pretentious—qualities his playing never had. In the late '60s, Elvin taught at Frank Ippolito's Drum Shop on 8th Avenue in New York City. One afternoon Elvin was running behind in his schedule, and Frank was trying to find someone to go tell him that he needed to end the lesson. No one would go upstairs and dare interrupt Elvin! Soon there was laughter in the stairwell, and down he walked, a Heineken in hand, and his arm wrapped around the shoulders of a youngster who looked up at him with pure admiration and joy. Elvin's message wasn't just musical.

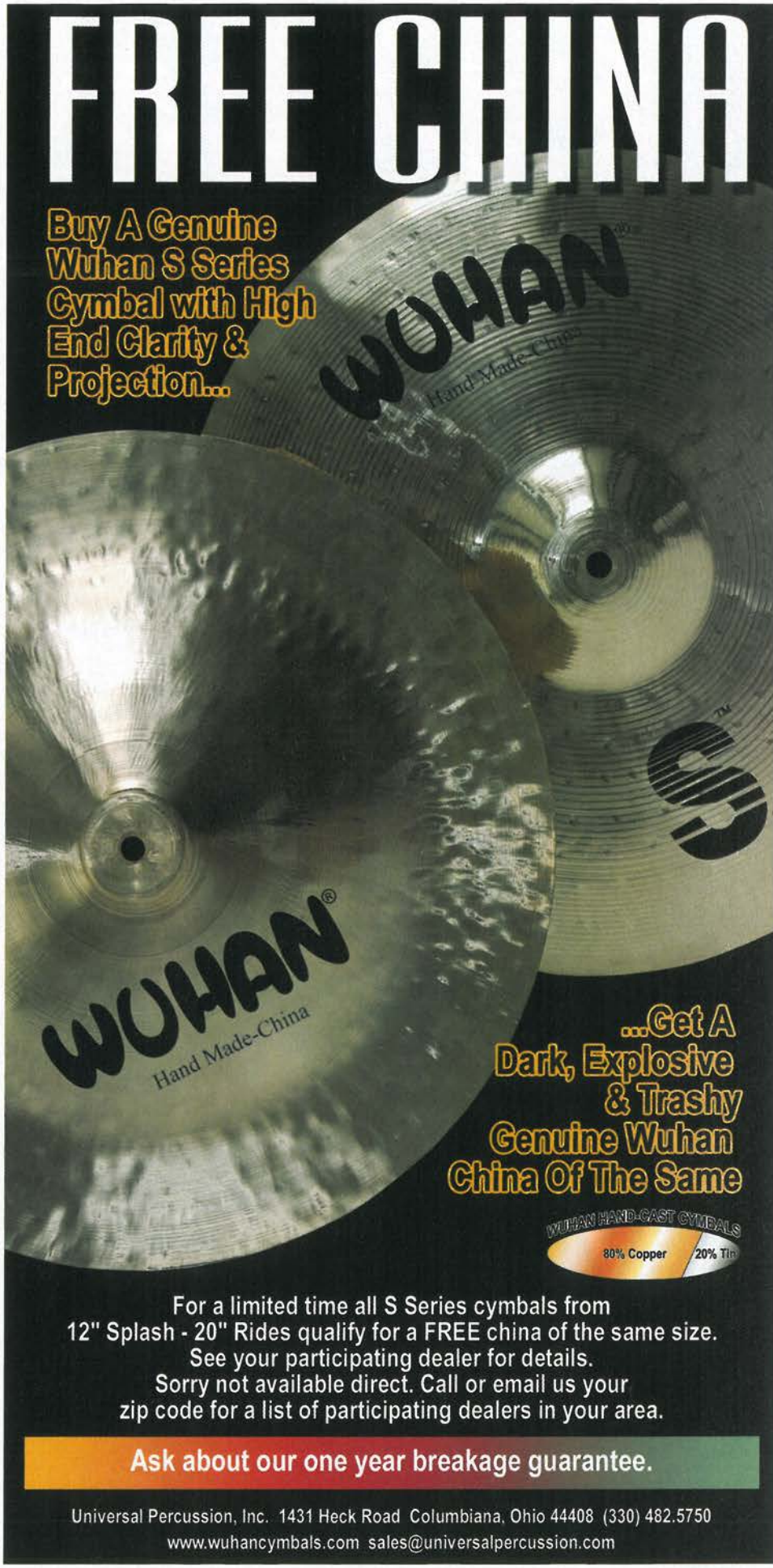
Ed Soph
(Woody Herman, educator)

Another era of tremendous importance has come to a close with the passing of the great Elvin Jones. Not only did he change drumming, he changed *music*. Can you imagine seeing Elvin with Coltrane for the first time? It must have been like being blind and then suddenly being in Senssuround.

Elvin owned it. He tapped into the sacred. His approach opened up an entire new vista, a completely new panorama of rhythmic conception that widened every arena of musical phenomena. It's *that* big. He's also arguably the most imitated drummer in modern jazz, for good reason.

Elvin's importance to me, his influence on me and the respect I have for him, cannot be overstressed. Although we will all miss him immensely, he will live on in music, I believe, forever.

Vinnie Colaiuta
(Frank Zappa, Sting, studio great)



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Elvin Remembered

Nobody played jazz as explosively as Elvin did, especially when he was with Coltrane. It was like listening to John Bonham but in a jazz context. My favorite disc with Elvin is Coltrane's *Africa/Brass*. That's one of the coolest.

John Otto
(Limp Bizkit)

As a kid, I gravitated so much to Elvin's wide-open beat. He's the foundation of everything I do; he really opened me up. Elvin had a way of making everyone feel comfortable when they played with him. McCoy Tyner told me that Coltrane said Elvin could adapt to any situation and that Elvin wanted everyone in the band to feel great.

Eric Harland
(Terence Blanchard, Greg Osby)

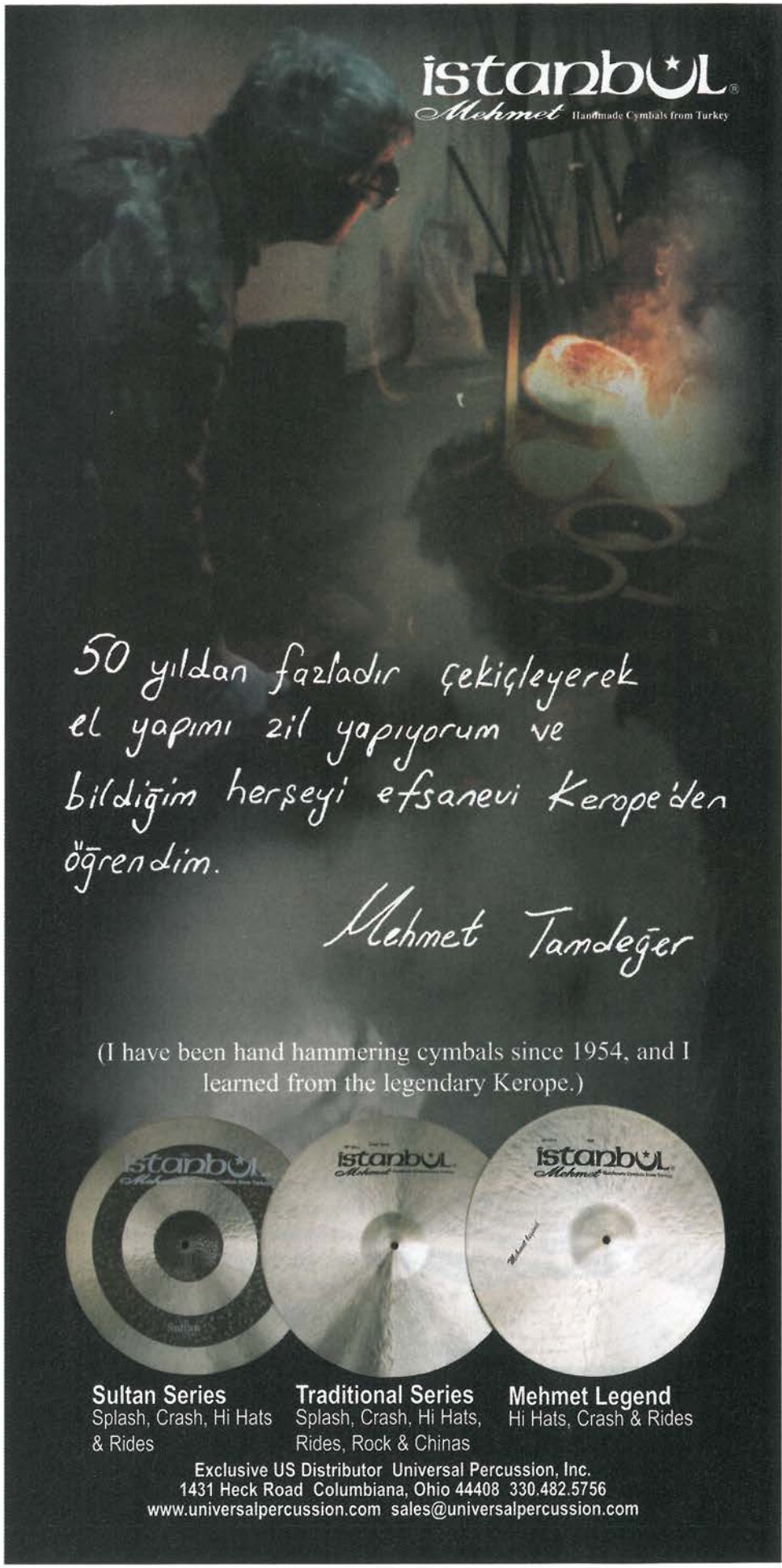
Elvin Jones loved people. I can still picture him coming out after a club date with The Jazz Machine in his velour "boxer's robe" and meeting with fans. He loved conversation and he loved to laugh. The first time I met him, in the early '70s, he was playing The Jazz Workshop in Boston with Jimmy Garrison on bass and Dave Liebman on winds. I went with two drummer friends. On his break, he came over and sat at our table. I couldn't believe it; he just sat down and started talking with us.

Elvin was wearing a golden fish pendant around his neck. My friend asked him if he was a Piesces, to which he replied, "No, I just like fish," cracking himself up with that answer. I still have the pair of sticks he gave me that night. The last time I saw him, I asked if I could take a picture with him. He smiled that big Elvin smile and said, "Okay, as long as you don't work for the IRS," followed by that long, pulsing, drawn-out laugh.

Casey Scheuerell
(Jean-Luc Ponty, educator)

I was playing at Bradley's once with James Williams, and Elvin came down and sat in. He kept looking over at me and saying, "Allen, I like these drums, but they won't stay still." He played so powerfully that every time he hit the bass drum it would go flying under the piano. Later on that night Elvin said to me, "Bradley was a friend of mine, and what better friend to have than someone who *owns* a bar." And, of course, everyone has their story about how Elvin hugged them until they almost passed out.

Carl Allen
(Freddie Hubbard, Jackie McLean, solo artist)



Elvin Remembered

One of my favorite Elvin moments on record is the first track of Steve Grossman's album, *Time To Smile*. Elvin takes fours and the phrasing is total genius. I was told that early in his career his innovation was oftentimes misunderstood and under-appreciated. To this day, it's *still* cutting-edge.

Zach Danziger
(Wayne Krantz, Chuck Loeb)

I grew up seeing Elvin around my house because he was good friends with my father, Freddie Waits. He was a force in music, and I was very attracted to his drumming as a kid. Not even considering his technique, what got to me was how Elvin made me feel when I heard him play. He was like thunder and lightning.

Nasheet Waits
(Fred Hersch, Antonio Hart)

I learned a lot from Elvin on how to play and hear polyrhythms, because the guy was the king of polyrhythms himself. I listened to all the stuff he played with Coltrane, and I still listen to it all, even the bootlegs.

When Elvin first came on the scene, he was hated. They hated anybody who wasn't approaching things from the norm. Elvin was ahead of his time. When people caught up, they finally heard what was happening.

Dennis Chambers
(John Scofield, John McLaughlin, Santana)

Elvin taught me that you can be so free but still be within the structure. What he did with the concept of time, you can't describe. He taught us there is no wrong or right. It's all about playing from the heart.

Billy Kilson
(Bob Belden, Dave Holland)

I used to watch Elvin and Coltrane play a lot, and I learned so much. But playing with Elvin was even more beyond my expectations. Playing alongside him every night and watching him up close was a hell of an experience.

Elvin went out just like he played. He didn't want to sit in a hospital. He wanted to be out there where it was happening. Elvin was an incredible person.

Rashied Ali
(John Coltrane, avant-garde great)

Elvin Jones was the most outrageously different drummer from any of the master drummers in the history of jazz. From Baby Dodds forward there is a logical progression stylistically. But with Elvin, he played completely differently from any of the drummers who came before him. It's almost as if he's from another planet. Elvin is also one of the most misunderstood drummers. Some people listen to him on the Coltrane records and think he's out of time, but Elvin always knew where "1" was. He studied all the greats. He learned it all, from jazz to classical, but he said, "I'm going to play this according to *my* gospel."

Kenny Washington
(Dizzy Gillespie, Betty Carter)

We've lost one of the great masters of the drumset. Elvin Jones was definitely one of my influences, and he was very inspirational—not just as a drummer, but as to what was *behind* his drumming. He was a very strong, creative, energetic force that propelled The Coltrane Quartet to uncharted musical territory and emotional and spiritual creativity. Everybody remembers that period, but I like to remember Elvin also for the sensitivity that he had when he was outside of the quartet, when he played very tastefully and dynamically with shading and touch. He knew how to set up the musicians. He never played too loud—always impeccable with brush work and stick work.

I remember hearing him at his seventy-fifth birthday party at the Blue Note. It was wonderful, beautiful. His was always the right touch. He was a *very* sensitive musician. Elvin will be missed, but I also want to celebrate his life and the contributions that he left us.

Jack DeJohnette
(jazz legend)

Once you hear Elvin's creativity, fire, and intense musicality, it makes an impression that you'll never forget. It remains with you in your *soul*. He was an incredible human being. At his seventy-fifth birthday party he played so incredibly well. I had to go back to the drawing board! There is no "too old" to do anything. If you do things right, you'll just get better at them. I learned that from Elvin Jones.

Steve Jordan
(Keith Richards, James Taylor, producer)

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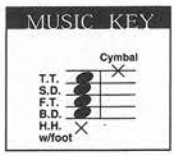
Elvin Jones
Style & Analysis

by John Riley



I have been a student and fan of Elvin Jones' drumming for over thirty years, and I'm grateful to have had the opportunity in the last couple of years to get to know Mr. Jones, the man. I will miss his smiling, bear-hug greeting.

If you've heard his music, I'm certain you've been struck, as I still am, by how "in the moment" and passionate his playing was. Elvin Jones, the man, was exactly that way too. He was an intent listener, open to and well versed on many subjects. Conversations were just like his playing—intense, wide-ranging, vivid, and lively.

The passing of this master is a great loss. Fortunately, there are numerous videos and countless audio recordings of Elvin's contributions. I'm hopeful that people will revisit his work and use it as a model of exceptional personal development and musical expression.

Below are excerpts from two of my previous columns that examine conceptual, technical, and stylistic elements of Elvin's amazing drumming. I invite you to explore them and to put a little Elvin into everything you do. It will put a smile on your face.

Elvin's Comping

Elvin! Few musicians create such a strong impression that we recognize them by their first name alone. But ever since the early 1960s, "Elvin" is all you've needed to say to conjure up images of intense sonic alchemy.

Mr. Jones was born (in 1927) and raised in Pontiac, Michigan and was the youngest son of a minister. Two of his older brothers, pianist Hank and cornetist Thad, made their own significant marks on the music world and helped young Elvin get started on the right track. Though Elvin was playing with fine musicians in the Detroit area in his late teens and twenties, he didn't make national waves until he joined John Coltrane's band in 1960 at the age of thirty-three.

Elvin had a very unusual sound and approach to playing the drums, of which he stated clearly, "I think of the drumset as one instrument, not a collection of instruments, and I take that single idea as the basis for my whole approach to the drums."

Early in his career, many musicians found Elvin's style confounding. They were not accustomed to having the time volleyed about the kit. Rather, they wanted to hear more consistent and repetitious rhythms on the ride cymbal, snare drum, bass drum, and hi-hat.

One musician observed that when he was playing with Elvin he felt like he was riding in a train that was going in one direction while sitting on top of another train going in the opposite direction!

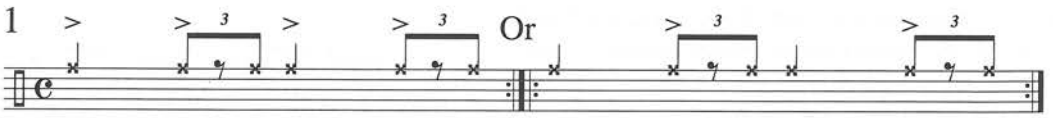
Every time I've had the opportunity to play opposite a master like Buddy, Tony, Jack, Peter, Dennis, Vinnie, and so many others, I've been inspired to play the best music that I was capable of. That being said, one particular night at the Bottom Line, when I played with Randy Brecker opposite The Elvin Jones Jazz Machine, is especially notable in my mind. We opened the first set, with Elvin's band following, and they were on fire. After the intermission, we opened up again, but when I started to play, Elvin was playing *me*. I wasn't trying to sound like Elvin, but Elvin's spirit had taken over my interpretation of the music. His power, grace, ideas, and groove became the drumming accompanying Randy Brecker. I can't explain what happened or why it happened, but for that one set I was just inspired, subconsciously, in a way that I've never felt since.

Elvin, through the deployment of his "one instrument" concept, de-emphasized the traditional driving cymbal beat and hi-hat as markers of the pulse. This approach generated a rounder, more legato, yet still driving groove by spreading the time out around the entire kit. At one point the cymbal is the lead voice, at another it's the hi-hat, an instant later the bass drum and snare drum are prominent. Additionally, Elvin was the first drummer to comp while using vocabulary consistently stressing the middle note of the triplet. This creates the illusion of rhythmic elasticity, thereby generating the feeling of being on the "wrong train."

Here are some ideas to explore from the world of Mr. Jones.

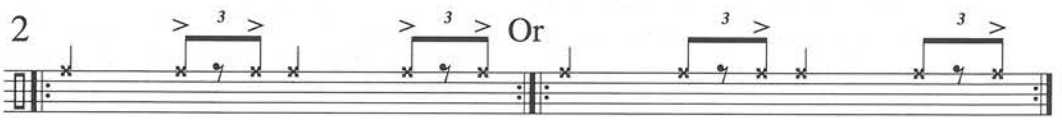
Traditional ride cymbal phrasing

1



Elvin's ride cymbal phrasing

2



While playing the hi-hat on 2 and 4 and keeping a consistent ride pattern, practice the following comping ideas (which stress the middle triplet note) as both one-measure and four-measure phrases. A good tempo to start at is quarter note = 60.

3

Elvin varied his touch on the snare drum by doubling or buzzing the middle triplet note. Practice the following ideas as one-bar phrases, then combine them into a four-bar phrase. Make sure that your snare drum phrasing is accurate; don't play the doubled middle triplet note as the "e-&" of straight 16th notes.

4

Here's the same idea in a three-beat cycle:

5

Elvin maximized his "one instrument" concept by completely integrating his hi-hat into the comping scheme. By playing the bass drum or hi-hat on the middle note of the triplet, he generated more variety, which resulted in an even more "topsy-turvy" feel. (Play the hi-hat as written.)

6

Elvin created long phrases by incorporating mixed three-beat motives, as in the following example. Be careful to keep your ride pattern steady.

7

The ideas above represent "concentrated" excerpts of Elvin-like phrases. After you're comfortable with them and have worked through their intrinsic coordination obstacles, experiment with allowing your ride cymbal pattern to accommodate—i.e., follow—the flow of the other three limbs. This looser ride approach will help complete the "one instrument" vibe.

Elvin's Soloing

Imagine you're looking at an abstract painting by Picasso. At first you're unsure of what you're viewing, but shortly you begin to recognize eyes and a nose, and eventually things become a little clearer. The features in this portrait are in strange positions, and their proportions are very unusual. Though the portrait is abstract, it's clearly the work of a gifted and visionary artist.

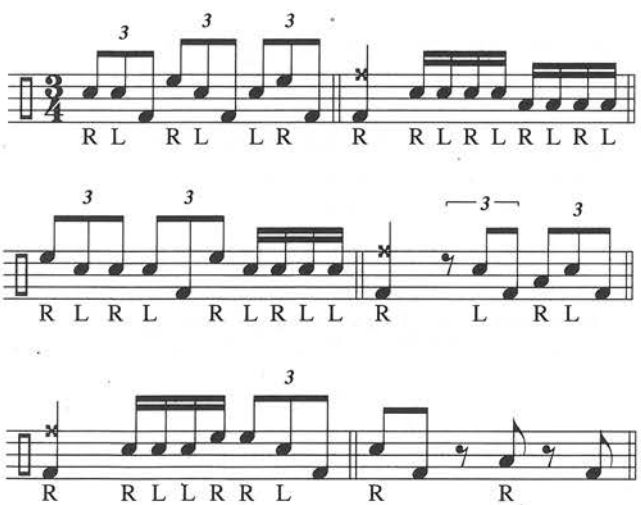
To many a musician's ears, an Elvin Jones drum solo is even more abstract than a Picasso painting. A painting is in a frame, which creates an outline or border for the work. An Elvin drum solo is a fluid event during which the "frame" may not be apparent until the solo's completion. Furthermore, though Elvin rarely played a "free" solo, he was cunning in his displacement of musical landmarks, and his solo phrasing symmetry was difficult to comprehend—a solo's "face" might have three noses and...is that an eye? Some people have difficulty following the phrasing.

For me, Elvin's performances are very melodic, and they incorporate masterful facility, ingenuity, and passion. They're abstract masterpieces in their own right.

Elvin stated that he always played off of the melody, so the first step to "hearing" one of his solos is to listen to the solo while simultaneously singing the song's melody. This will help you hear his phrasing. You'll notice that the phrases can be several measures long and don't necessarily begin or resolve on beat 1.

Like his comping, many phrases are made up of three-beat motifs, which go across the barline and, at times, across the phrase line. (The phrase line is a significant landmark in a song's harmony, usually every four or eight measures.) Elvin also liked to "shift the frame" by developing simple motifs—like right, left, foot—at various rates of speed.

Below are several three-beat Elvin motifs. First, practice them as individual-measure exercises.

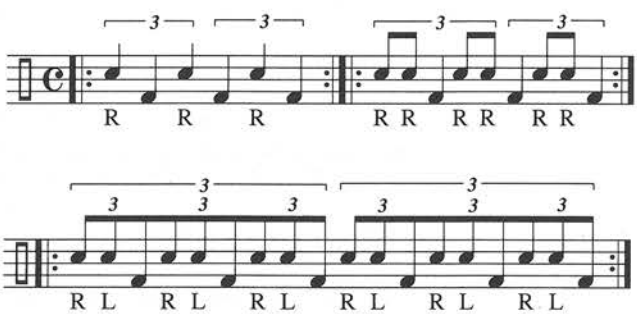


Now go back and combine the motifs into four-bar phrases to feel how they unfold across the barlines. To help you keep your place and internalize the phrases, it will be helpful for you to count out loud: "1234, 2234, 3234, 4234."

Here's a favorite time-stretching (or "frame shifting") device incorporating a three-note motif:

Once you're comfortable with the previous example, experiment with reversing some of the hand combinations from right-left to left-right. Then experiment with substituting the hi-hat for some of the bass drum notes.

The triplet-on-triplet rate in the second half of measure three above contributes a lot of elasticity and mystery to Elvin's playing. He often shifted between the 16th-note rate, the 8-over-2 rate, and the 9-over-2 rate of triplets-on-triplets. Triplets-on-triplets can be best felt by practicing this exercise:



In the 1960s Elvin played a standard four-piece drumkit. In recent years he played a kit with four toms, where his two floor toms were often tuned lower than his bass drum. This tuning really opened up the possibilities for creating ear-stretching phrases out of the ideas above.

Finally, the solo on the following page is one of my favorites by Elvin. It's a very concise, passionate statement from Wayne Shorter's album *Night Dreamer,* recorded in 1964. "Black Nile" is a thirty-two-measure song on which Elvin took a one-chorus solo. Check out the variety of material he chose to develop, his long opening phrase with its deceptive conclusion on beat 4 of bar eight, the three-beat phrases in the bridge (bars 17–25), and the solo's explosive final phrase.

Get the CD, sing the song's melody along with the drum solo, and learn this solo! I've included the stickings that help me approximate Elvin's sound and flow, but feel free to experiment.

"Black Nile"

♩= 208
LLR R L
R L R L R L L R L R L L L R L R L L
R L R L R L R L R L L R L R L L R L
L R R R L R L R L L R L R L
R R L R L R L R L R L

A Dream Come True

Teching For Elvin

by James Bennington

I had the opportunity to work for the great Elvin Jones as his drum tech/band manager from 2000 to 2002. Along with Elvin, his wife Keiko, and the various bandmembers (Ari Brown, Pat La Barbera, Antoine Roney, Delfeayo Marsalis, and Eric Lewis), I traveled all over California, and to Seattle, Albuquerque, New York, England, and Switzerland. The work was hard and, at first, something I didn't think I could do. But ultimately it became one of the greatest experiences of my life—one I'll always be thankful for.

First Contact

In 1994, I watched Elvin every night for a week at the Catalina Bar & Grill in Los Angeles. I was always seated right by his hi-hat. On the last day of the engagement, I ran into Elvin at the hotel. He recognized me and asked if I'd like to take a walk with him. We walked down Hollywood Boulevard, talking about his latest recordings with his brother Hank, as well as Sonny Sharrock's *Ask The Ages*.

Back at the hotel, I grabbed a magazine and a pair of brushes and asked Elvin if he'd show me one of his patterns. He proceeded to give me a brush lesson then and there. That night at Elvin's gig, during his standing ovation, I got an "Elvin hug" and a pair of sticks. Keiko invited me into the dressing room after the show. They thanked me for staying the week, and Keiko took a picture of Elvin and me together. That trip was the beginning of my relationship with Elvin and his music.

Getting Started

I saw Elvin regularly over the next six years at the Jazz Alley in Seattle, Washington. Elvin and Keiko got to know me, and I started helping out: getting drinks, guarding the dressing room when Elvin needed a little rest, carrying Elvin's cymbals, and walking Elvin and Keiko to their hotel. At the end of every engagement, they'd say, "There are no goodbyes," and that we'd meet again. Keiko even gave me a coveted Jazz Machine T-shirt and told me that I was an honorary member of the band.

By 1999 I was living in Portland, Oregon. It was then that I got the call to go on the road with The Jazz Machine.

Road Warriors

The Joneses kept up a rigorous touring schedule. Keiko, particularly, had inexhaustible energy. A familiar sight seen by many over the years was that of Keiko onstage, tuning the drums or watching close by and dancing to the music. At the end of the set, Elvin would look for her in the audience, and she would give him a signal for the encore. She was omnipresent, putting a robe on Elvin immediately after a set, or making him, eat. And she'd break the drums down and haul 'em out in five minutes if I didn't get on it!

The whole time I worked for Elvin and Keiko, they were like concerned parents with the band and me. "Where's your coat? How's the hotel? Do you have enough money? Did you eat?" That last one came all the time. I've never been offered so many sandwiches in my life.

A Tough Boss

People in the know have told me, "If you can work for Keiko, you can work for anybody." Keiko herself would always say to me, "James, people say I'm hard, but I'm honest," and, "You should

The author with Elvin Jones

Photo courtesy of Keiko Jones

pay tuition to go to the school of Elvin Jones." I had to agree (although they always paid me generously). I also credit Keiko for her love and devotion to Elvin, her management of his highly respected and successful career, and his longevity as a man and as an artist. These are just a few of the countless things she accomplished during their thirty-six years of marriage.

More Than A Job

Setting up Elvin's drums the way he wanted and making the cymbals shine always gave me the feeling that I was contributing to something great and worthwhile. Playing with the band during soundchecks on Elvin's kit was like playing baseball with Babe Ruth's bat and glove.

Elvin loved classical music, and he always said that he had had early aspirations of playing in a symphony. To me, you heard that full symphonic sound coming from his drums. The open toms, cracking snare and bass drum, and big, flushed cymbals practically played themselves. I loved the way Elvin would go for mallets at the end of a ballad and conclude with that big floor tom roll. I also loved the uniforms: dark shoes, dark pants, and a Jazz Machine T-shirt. They kept the audiences' attention focused on the music.

James Bennington

A great team: Keiko and Elvin Jones, 2002.

Once, at a clinic, a young boy asked Elvin if he'd ever played funk. Elvin thought for a moment, and then spoke of his early days when he played in after-hours clubs full of strippers, hustlers, and pimps. He concluded with, "I don't think you can get any funkier than that!"

Fond Memories

I had many great moments working for Elvin and Keiko, like the time we sat down to a leisurely meal in a beautiful hotel in Switzerland, after arriving from a different time zone. Elvin told us a little about his relationship with Miles Davis, and how they would drive around in Miles' Ferrari and talk for hours. It was one of the most relaxed and personal times I'd spent with them.

I met a lot of interesting people, and I learned so much: how to do it, how not to do it, what it's like at the top and on the road. These lessons made a man out of me. And I also got to listen to Elvin play every night! Just when I'd think he couldn't top what he'd done the night before, he'd reach into his "back pocket" and play something new and unique.

Playing with the band during soundchecks on Elvin's kit was like playing baseball with Babe Ruth's bat and glove.

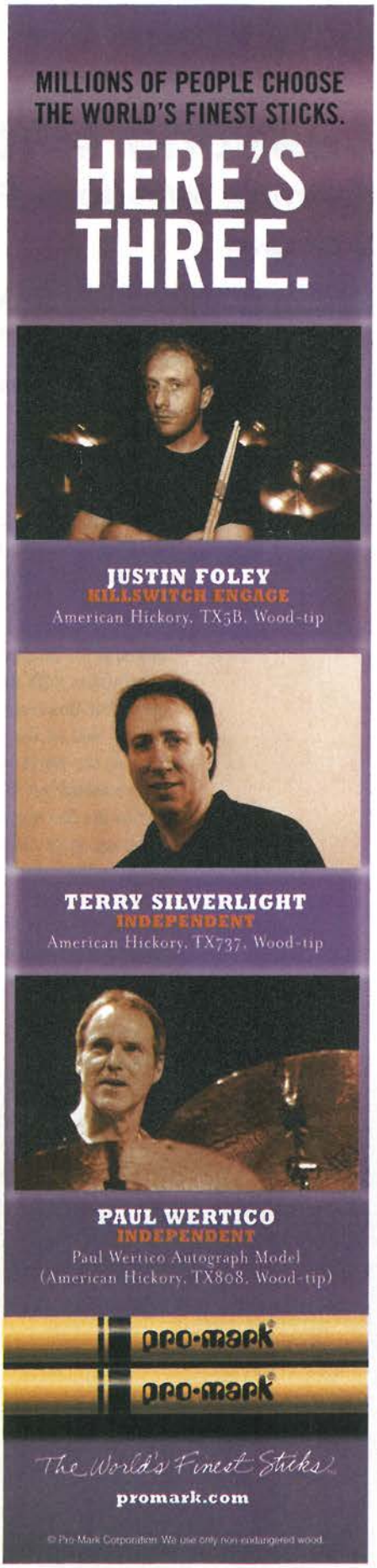
To me, Elvin was sincerity, integrity—the genuine article. He never left the tradition of jazz. His last major-label recording, *It Don't Mean A Thing* (Enia), was done years ago. Keiko told me, "We're just going to bring the music to the people."

The man made no compromises or concessions to his art. Despite circulatory problems in his legs and other effects of his advancing years, he'd give the music his all on every gig. Then he'd stay afterwards and sign autographs, take pictures, give out sticks, and offer advice. Then he'd go back to his room and rest so he could do it all again. He *was* The Jazz Machine!

Postscript

Things change. Eventually I moved on to my own career, and Elvin and Keiko got someone new. I saw Elvin for the last time at The Jazz Alley in Seattle, in October of last year. Although frail, he played beautifully. Backstage after the show he greeted me warmly, and I thanked him for all he'd done for me. We said our "I love you's," and then he and Keiko bade me goodnight.

Rest in peace, Elvin Jones. You will be sorely missed.



Lessons With Elvin

Gaining Wisdom From The Master

by Bill Larkin

From March of 1974 through June of 1975 I had the rare privilege of studying drums with Elvin Jones. I averaged one lesson every three to four weeks. This article is my account of those lessons, which I hope will provide a glimpse into the unique character and wisdom of a genuine drumming giant.

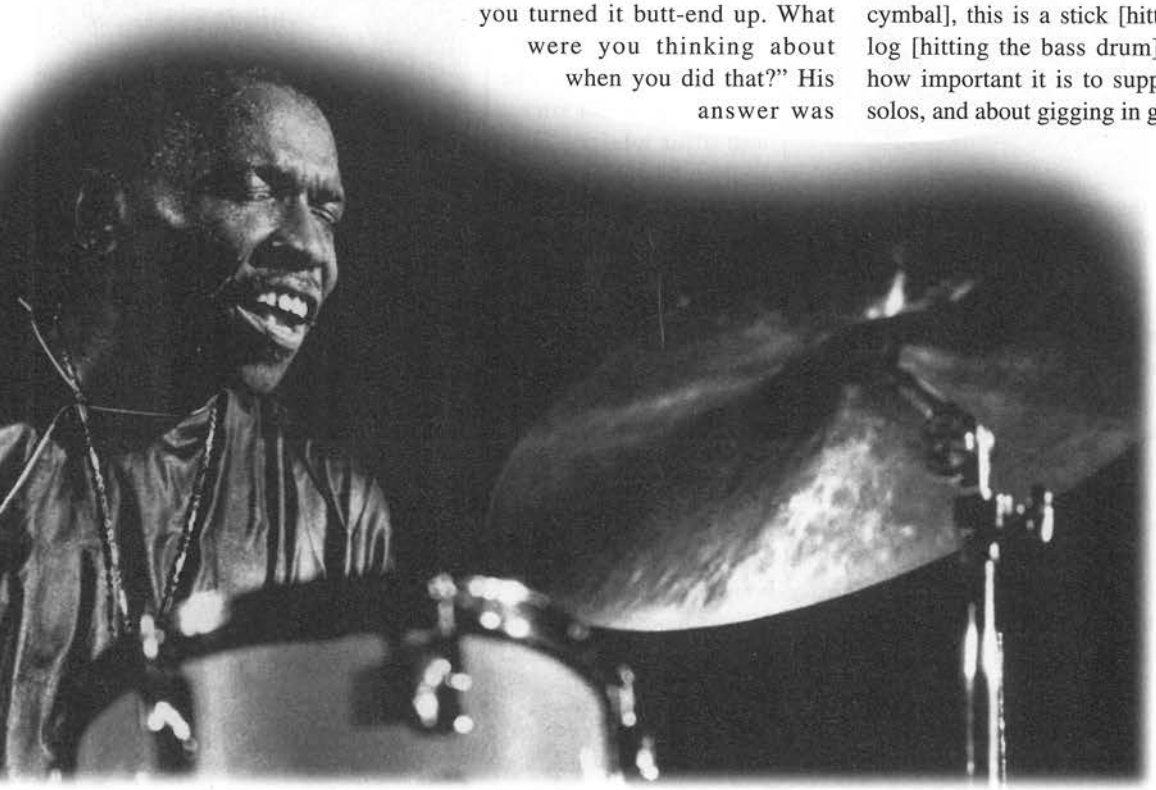
To Begin At The Beginning...

I first saw Elvin at New York City's Village Vanguard in January of 1974. I had just arrived in the city to join the Brooklyn Navy Band. It was a Monday, and I went back the next five nights, always sitting just off Elvin's left.

Elvin usually played with his eyes closed. Sometimes he played with the tips of his sticks, and sometimes with the butts. There was evidence to suggest that this may have been random, and that if the wrong end of the stick came up, Elvin just went with it. But the pulse was *always* there, even if the attack was washed out in the fury of his accompaniment.

On the last night of the gig, as the soloist was stepping up to the mike, Elvin looked at the end of the stick in his right hand, and very deliberately turned it around. Not a flip or a twirl, like most drummers would do. After the gig I went to him and said, "You played with both ends of the stick all night. But at one point I saw you look wide-eyed at it just before you turned it butt-end up. What were you thinking about when you did that?" His answer was immediate and clear: "Dynamics, man. Dynamics." Then he smiled his childlike smile and shook my hand with the same passion with which he had played.

When Elvin came back to the Vanguard a month later, I took up a place just off his hi-hat. At the end of the week I asked him if he would give me lessons. He told me to see his wife, Keiko, to set it up. Everything was pure business until, as Elvin was leaving, he turned to me and said, "You ain't no damn beginner, are you? Because I don't take no damn beginners." I reached down into my depths (such as they were at that moment) and replied that no, I wasn't a beginner.



The Lessons Begin

The first lesson was an overview. Elvin asked me to play. Then he said, "You could be on a mountain, freezing to death. But you could light a match, then add a pine cone, then a stick. Pretty soon you'd have a nice, raging bonfire. This is a pine cone [hitting a cymbal], this is a stick [hitting a tom], and this is a log [hitting the bass drum]." Then he talked about how important it is to support soloists, about drum solos, and about gigging in general.

The rest of the lessons took the form of my bringing in questions that I had thought about since the last lesson, and taking things to the next step. Then I would go to the Village Vanguard to hear Elvin's gig, and maybe we'd talk afterward. What follows is not so much chronological as it is conceptual, in the way that the ideas that Elvin shared with me hang together logically.

The Lessons Continue

I started one lesson by asking Elvin what he thought about playing loud. Please imagine the following sentence starting at the most violent, thunderous level possible, then taking a slight but unmistakable decrescendo to end in an Alpine meadow in springtime, with the primroses just starting to bloom. "Loud? LOUD? I could break the drums if I wanted. But I don't want to. I want to make music."

This led to a discussion about projection. "The 18" bass drum has the best projection," said Elvin. He also added, "When you play in an ensemble, your energy has to flow out. If it doesn't, it caves back in on you, and that's no good."

What about gear? "The main thing is to have as wide an assortment as possible. That goes for drums, cymbals, or sticks. There's nothing worse than going to hit something and it isn't there. You should be able to produce every sound you hear in your head." To illustrate this point, Elvin advised me to fasten some leather to the butts of a pair of sticks. I tried it, but later found that Dr. Scholl's Moleskin is easier to work with.

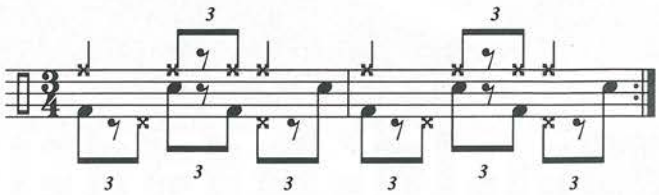
Elvin stressed one thing about cymbals: "You should be able to get at least twenty sounds out of each cymbal. If you can't, then either there's something wrong with the cymbal, or there's something wrong with you." He demonstrated on a cracked cymbal that was close at hand. I stopped counting at twenty, but there were a lot of sounds in that cymbal.

What about chops? Elvin said, "Play a press roll, like an emcee was saying, 'Here he is, ladies and gentlemen....' Doing that smoothly is one kind of chops. I came up in the bebop era, so I have bebop chops. But whatever you have, use them to keep tension on the time and complement the melody and the soloist." (It's worth noting that *many* of Elvin's comments began with "First, you keep tension on the time, then....")

"It's like you're making a frame around the soloist's picture," Elvin went on. His point was to not let your accompaniment be so involved that you get in the soloist's way, but also not so sparse that it doesn't connect. Connect the solo to the melody, to the rest of the accompaniment, and straight down to the heart.

"Take some idea and add your contribution, emotional as well as intellectual," Elvin continued. "Then see if someone else picks up on that and sends it through the band. When it comes back to you, add your contribution again, until you have a symphony of intellectual and emotional improvisation.

Although most of Elvin's tutelage was of a conceptual nature, he did give me one fun exercise to work on. It's a deceptively simple but very melodic two-bar phrase in 3/4 time. And it's classic Elvin. Give it a try!



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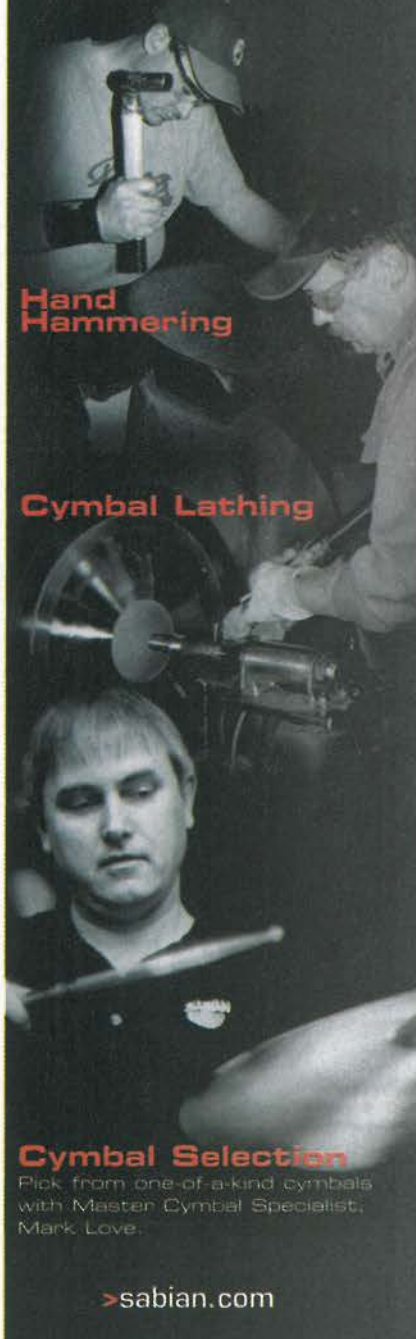

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"And if none of that works," he added, "well then, just swing their asses to death."

That night at the Vanguard, the band played a blues shuffle that lasted half an hour. Elvin never broke out of the shuffle pattern except for some lead-in fills. All his phrasing came out of his dynamics and cymbal colorations.

New Topics

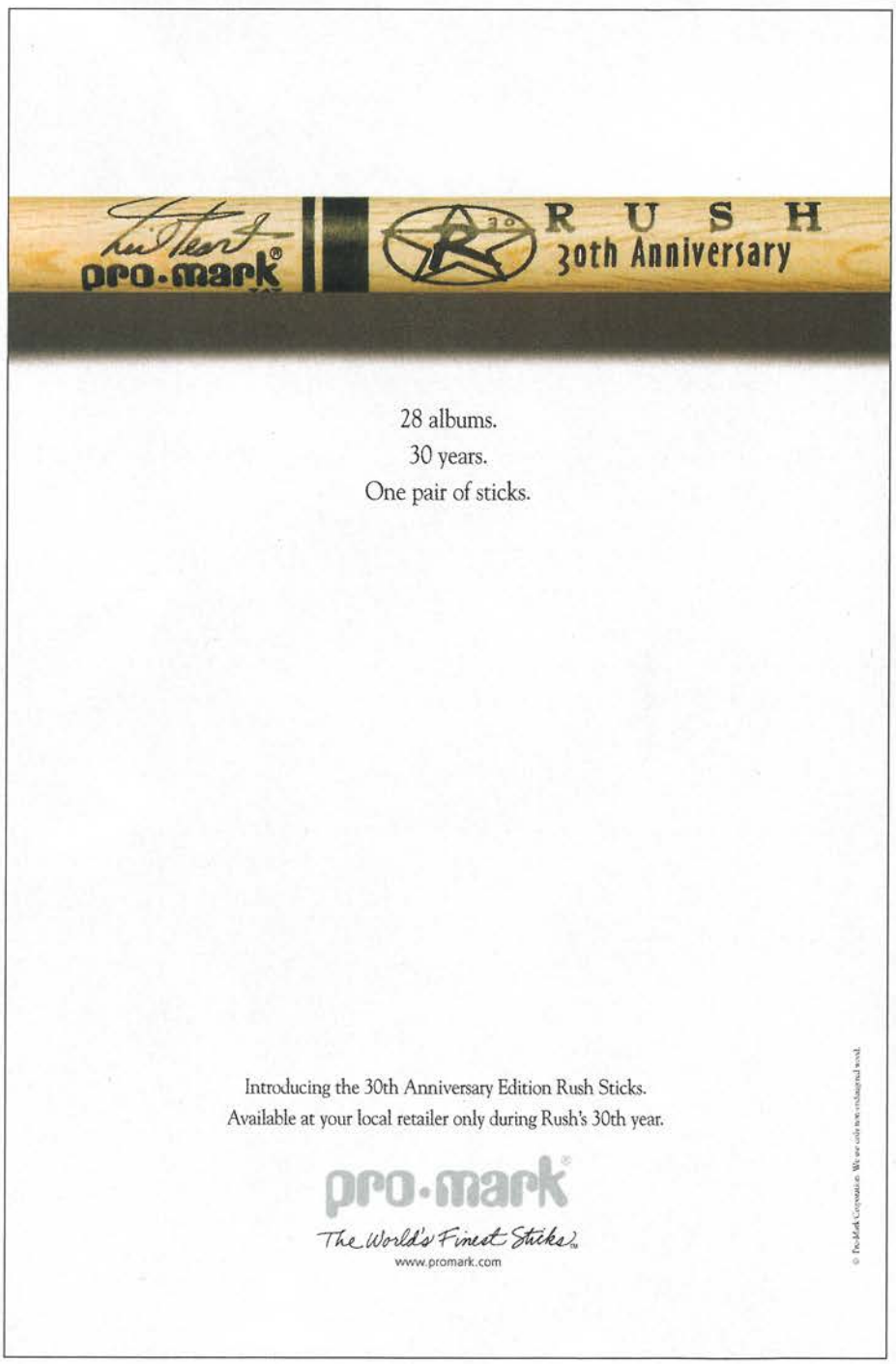
At another lesson, I came in perturbed about playing with a sax player who would go into 4/4 no matter what the time signature of the tune really was. I guess I was hoping that Elvin would join me in a chorus of "Complain About The Idiots Blues." Instead, he just said, "So? What if he changes time every other measure? Follow him. Follow him into hell, and come back with smiles on your faces. The guys out front have to know that you're there for them...that if their car breaks down, you'll come by and take them to the gig."

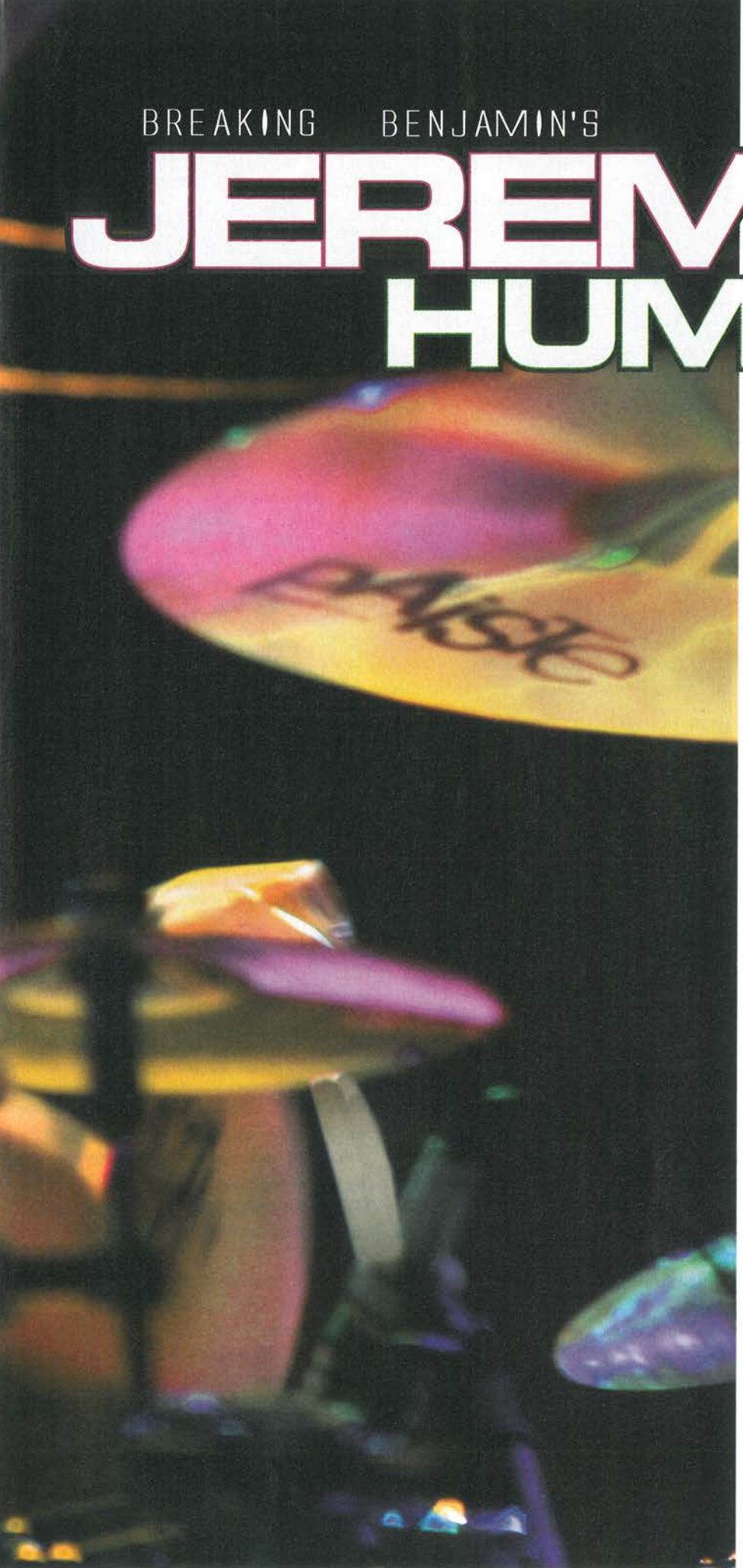
What about playing big band? Elvin said, "I've never played in the big band style, but I have played with large numbers of musicians. But no matter how many musicians, or what the style, you have to send yourself out like ganglia [the nerves that keep the cells of the heart and other vital organs working together]. Now, this is The Pearl—the single principle that works everywhere, at all times. Playing the drums, driving a car, raising children... everywhere, all the time. But it only works if your sphincter is pointed at the ground and your head is pointed in the other direction."

That night at the Vanguard, my wife and I were at a table directly in front of the bandstand. When the second set started, the stage filled up with seven saxes, piano, and the regular rhythm section of guitar, bass, and Elvin. The whole set was one tune: "Who's Rocking My Jazz Boat" by Frank Foster, who was one of Elvin's regular sax players. For the last twenty minutes of the tune they jammed on the montuno bridge, with everyone on the bandstand soloing at once. The tag lasted another three minutes. As soon as Elvin hit the last crash, he stood up, smiled like a sunrise coming up over the cymbals, and said, "See, Bill? See what I mean by 'sending yourself out like ganglia'?"

What about soloing? "You do anything all your life, you ought to be able to do it by yourself for fifteen minutes," was Elvin's response. "Start with an idea, and add to it. Listen to guys like Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven. See how they applied theme and variation." Then Elvin sat down at the set and played a theme—three quarter notes and two 8ths—for a couple of bars. Then he applied variation until he had a complex set of relationships, after which he brought it back to the three quarter notes and two 8ths. He emphasized that the melody is always the best place to start. Develop the chops to say what you want to say, but don't let those chops drive your playing. It should be the other way around.

Finally, I asked Elvin about the roll of the drummer. "The greatest contribution of American music has been to take the conductor and put him or her into the musical organization. Instead of having someone stand in front, waving their hands to keep time and conveying mood by way of gestures, now those functions are performed by someone whose contribution is a part of the musical statement. And that person is the drummer."





BREAKING BENJAMIN'S

JEREMY HUMMEL

FIRE & Finesse

Jeremy Hummel is equal parts bombast and finesse. He's just as likely to ride hard on his China as he is to tap out an intricate riff on a 6" effects cymbal. He's as interested in "bringing back the gong" as he is in developing more finesse and subtlety on the kick drum. But even with a casual listen, you can tell that Hummel is a drummer's drummer, crafty and aggressive, but never self-indulgent.

Story by Harriet L. Schwartz

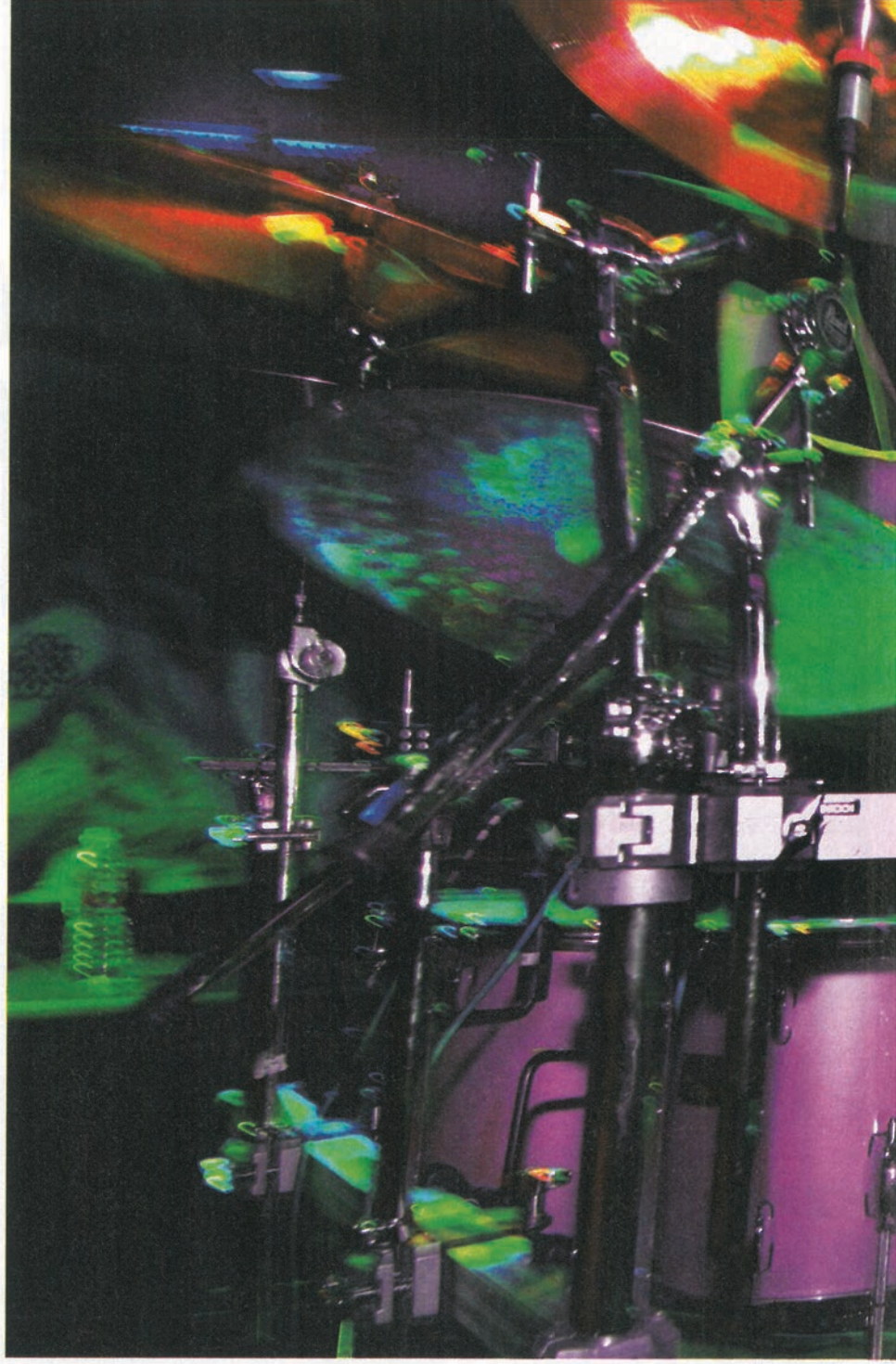
Photos by Paul La Raia

Hummel's band, Breaking Benjamin, hits hard—and so does he. Still, the drummer makes very musical choices. He knows when to leave a space empty and when to fill it. And one of the most impressive aspects of this up-and-comer's drumming is his use of subtlety. Jeremy mixes in musical elements such as tasty cymbal combinations, ghost notes, well-placed double pedal licks, and other such textures that you may not even notice until the third or fourth listen.

Breaking Benjamin is riding high on the success of their sophomore release, *We Are Not Alone*. The record's first single, "So Cold," is snagging plenty of airplay on rock radio. And the band is back on the road, having already toured with the likes of Fuel, 3 Doors Down, and Godsmack. They arrived on the rock scene in 2002 with their debut album, *Saturate*, which featured the hit single "Polyamorous." Hummel co-founded the band with singer/guitarist Ben Burnley, and the two wrote most of the songs on the band's first record.

Hailing from Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, a small town in the eastern part of the state, Breaking Benjamin began work last summer on its second album in a most logical setting—a barn. After several weeks of work, Hummel and his bandmates had a collection of songs that were decent, but hardly exceptional. So they invited producer David Bendeth (Vertical Horizon) in for a listen. Bendeth sat in on a practice session and took notes, and as he was about to leave, Hummel asked him what he thought of the band's new songs. The producer provided what Hummel says was an amazing amount of feedback.

"He told us, 'You guys need to get out of this barn,'" Hummel recalls. "'You've been here for two months. Let's pack it up. We're going to New Jersey, we'll get a decent rehearsal space, and we'll continue pre-production there.'" According to Hummel, that's when the good stuff began to happen.



MD: How did you approach your drum parts on the new album?

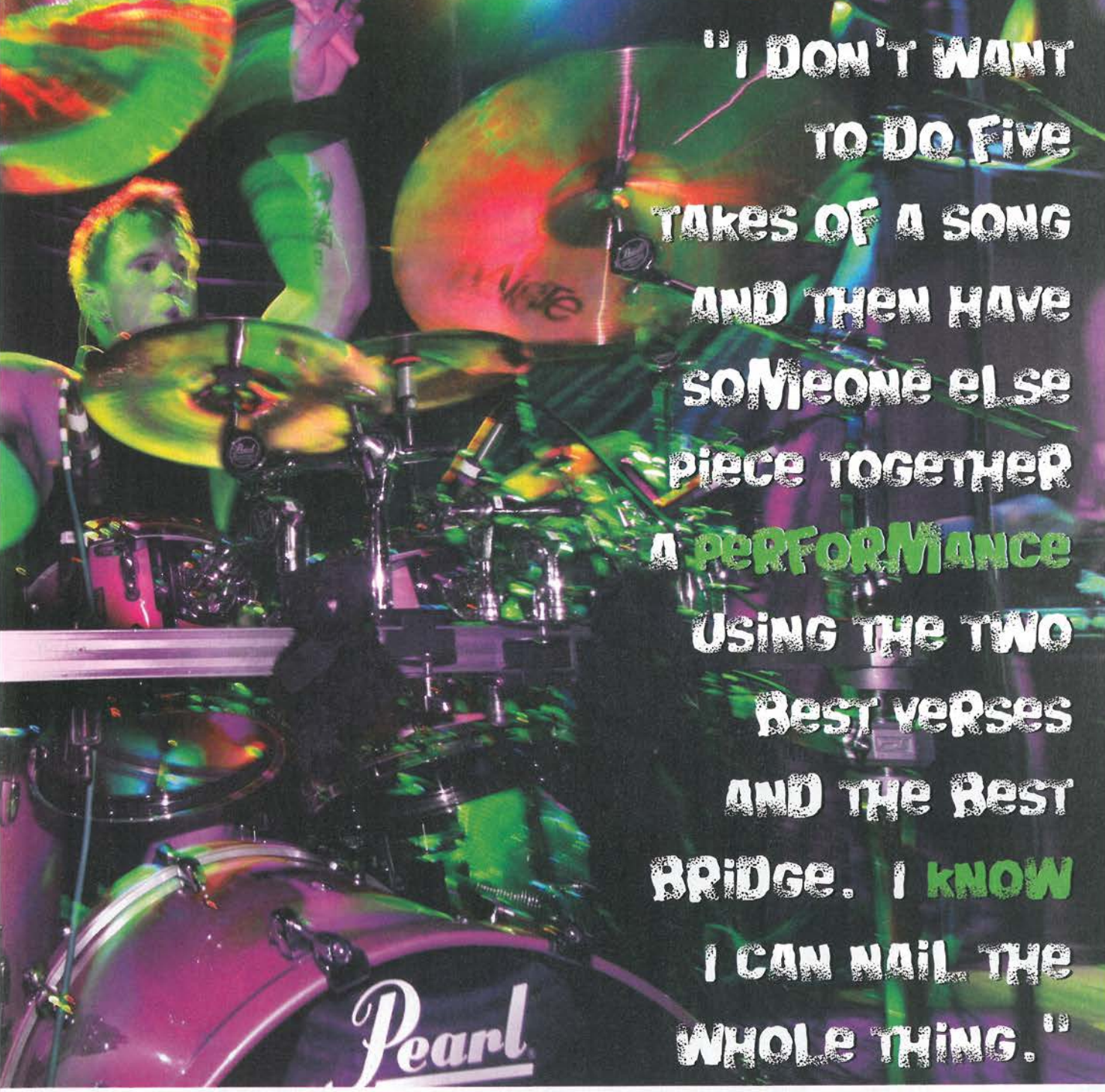
Jeremy: This time around, everything was spontaneous. When we went in to track the songs, most of the stuff I played was not premeditated. I had a skeleton of what I wanted to do, but I just went in there and played.

MD: Have you always been good at improvising?

Jeremy: Yes. I played in a lot of bands in the past. I was in a blues band for a while, a three-piece, and everything we did was based on improvisation. I was also very into The Allman Brothers, and they were always into that. So improvising has been a big part of my playing for some time.

MD: What advice do you have for drummers trying to develop their ability to improvise?

Jeremy: Listen to what's going on *around* you. I think one big mistake that a lot of people make is they listen to themselves too much and not to what the musicians around them are playing. A lot of times you can come up with a really cool part that is based on a counter-rhythm to what your bass player is doing. If you listen to people,



it makes everything so much more musical, rather than having four or five guys who are just locked in to their own parts.

MD: Did you use a click on this album?

Jeremy: Yes. The one thing I've learned to do is "manipulate" the click more. It's there and I'm playing along with it, but I'm not so cognizant of it anymore. I recognize it's there, but I know there are certain points in a song, like a chorus, where I'll want to push the time a bit. I'm able to do that without getting off of the click. It's all about getting comfortable enough with the click that you can work with and around it, and not against it.

MD: Talk about a song that stands out for you on the new record.

Jeremy: "Forget It" is unlike anything we've done before. I experimented with how to play that song. Ben [Burnley] had brought that song in with acoustic guitar and vocals and said, "I approached this song wanting to write something like I've never written before." I started off just putting a rock thing to it, like a Cars song or something, and that wasn't working. It was too cliché. So I experimented and said to our producer, David, "I hear it being more moody." He said, "Then play it moody," and that's how I came up with the constant thing on the toms. I'm doing a very simple tom/kick/snare pattern. The interesting thing is, if you listen, there aren't any fills in the song. It's just me playing groove the whole time.

MD: What does it take to make a song work with no fills?

Jeremy: The first thing you have to do is be sure you lay down a really good groove. Your job as a drummer is to make the song feel good. Even when we're playing live, if people out there aren't feeling what I'm

doing and I don't see them bobbing their heads and getting into it, then I'm not doing my job. And that's what I'm trying to do with a song like "Forget It." The whole time I was recording it, I was thinking that this is one of those songs where there's going to be a lot painted on top of what I'm doing. I knew that if I played too much, it would kill the song. So my job was to lay it down and let everything else fall on top of it.

MD: Talk more about groove.

Jeremy: I really think that's one thing I've always had, and I think that came from playing along with records when I was coming up. At one point, when I was a kid, I was into some heavy stuff, but I was also into funk and some rap. Listening to those types of music made me appreciate the groove. As of late, I've started getting into Dennis Chambers, and listening to Dennis you can't help but improve your groove.

MD: To what degree was this album Pro Tooled?

Jeremy: Drum-wise, not very much. I'm the kind of guy where, when you hear it, I want it to be what I played. I don't want to do five takes of a song and then have someone else piece together a performance using the two best verses and the best bridge. I know after a take which part I didn't play well. So I just ask to play the whole thing again, because I know I can nail it. I'm a guy who believes in getting the full performance in there. I'm sure there are a few places where they went in and moved a kick drum or something, but it was never a performance thing.

MD: You've spoken very positively about your work with producer David Bendeth. What advice do you have for other drummers about working with a producer?

Jeremy: David is a special producer. I've heard horror stories from my friends in the business, and I've read articles in *Modern Drummer*—everything from producers wanting drummers to play less and less, to asking them to do so many things differently. I have an open mind when someone suggests something. The great thing is that David played for two or three years with Billy Cobham, Lenny White, and all these great drummers. He has heard a lot of really good drumming. So for me, if anything, I had to step up.

David encouraged me to do what I wanted to. There wasn't any time when he wanted me to play less. If anything, he wanted me to do more. I remember with "Firefly," we were in pre-production and he would get mad at me because he wanted me to give him more. I was like, "Dude, I'm just not hearing what you're hearing." There were a few spots where he wanted me to go crazy. He would actually air drum to get me to play more, which was funny. And I was thinking, "Dude, what are you hearing? This doesn't call for that." Then I realized it wasn't that he was looking for me to play more. He wanted me to kick some life into the track.

David would say that with most of our material, the guitars and bass were doing the same thing throughout the songs. So what had room to expand and change? The vocals and the drums.

MD: Can you give an example of where you think the drums really change the vibe of a song?

Jeremy: "So Cold," the first single. What I'm doing in the verse is playing the toms and the piccolo with the snares turned off. And then in the chorus, I'm doing something I often do, which is switch over to a main snare drum. Then in the verse, I go back to

the piccolo. It sets the mood for the whole song, along with the guitar. It gives it a tribal, atmospheric vibe.

MD: One of the things you do particularly well is create texture with your cymbals. What do you look for in cymbals?

Jeremy: I have a lot of cymbals because I hear a lot of sounds for different things. I just switched to Sabian. I have four crashes, and all four have completely different characteristics.

One thing I do in choruses is, if I'm going to crash-ride the whole time, I'll go back and forth between cymbals. I'll play four bars with one crash and the next four with another. It adds a different vibe. That's one of those things a listener might not notice right away, but it adds another little subconscious change in there, which I like.

I also use accent cymbals—4", 6", 8"—though I didn't use them as much on this record. I also have two splashes and a China, plus hi-hats and a ride. Everything has its own place. If I'm going to come out of a funky fill, I'll end it on a splash. If it's a bigger rock fill, I might want to end it on a big crash. Also, to give it even more texture, I'll hit a crash and the China together. It's cool

Hummel's Kit

Drums: Pearl RetroSpec (6-ply maple) in red onyx finish
A. 3x13 piccolo snare (steel)
B. 8x14 Ludwig snare (8-ply maple with triple-flanged hoops)
C. 9x12 rack tom
D. 8x10 rack tom
E. 14x14 floor tom
F. 16x16 floor tom
G. 18x24 bass drum

Cymbals: Sabian
1. 14" HHX Evolution Mini-Chinese
2. 14" AAX Accelerator hi-hats
3. 16" HHXtreme crash
4. 4", 6", 8" accent splashes
5. 18" AAX Stage crash
6. 10" AA splash
7. 12" AAX splash
8. 18" AAX Chinese
9. 20" Paragon crash
10. 20" HHX Power ride
11. 18" HHXtreme brilliant crash

Miscellaneous:
aa. Tama Rhythm Watch
bb. LP tambourine

Hardware: Pearl, including their Eliminator double pedal (with medium spring tension and flat plastic beaters)
Heads: Aquarian Texture Coated with Power Dot on snare batter, High Performance snare-side (tuned tight), coated Response 2 on tom batters, black High Frequency on bottoms ("natural," midrange tuning, bottom slightly higher than top), Super Kick 2 on bass drum batter, HeadFirst logo head on front (batter tuned tight and punchy, front tuned to A flat)
Sticks: Vic Firth Rock model
Microphones: Shure Beta 91 and Beta 52 on kick, Audio Technica AT 23 on both snares and toms, AT 5100 on hi-hat and ride, AT 4050 for overheads

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MD: You also ride the China a lot.

Jeremy: Oh yeah. I'm big on that. But I've learned that if you do it too much, it doesn't stand out. You have to pick and choose your spots carefully.

When I'm riding the China, the guitar part is probably pretty staccato. The China will give it a bash that just screams out above it and emphasizes the time. When the part has that weight behind it, I want to give it that extra trashy thing that just slaps the listener in the face.

MD: How did you develop your touch on the cymbals?

Jeremy: The studio is much different from live. Live you want everything to be a show, and you're playing harder. In the studio, one thing I've always been interested in is how cymbals wash and decay when you hit them. That was one thing I loved about John Bonham, the way he hit cymbals. After he hit one, you could hear it wash forever. I've always been into that.

For example, if I'm playing a part and crash-riding a cymbal, I'm not going to end that part on the same cymbal. If you're riding a cymbal, every time you hit it, you're cutting off the wash or decay. If you're doing that and you end the part by hitting *another* cymbal, not only does it give you a different sound, it puts a clear ending on the section.

With ride cymbals—in fact, with any cymbal—it's all about how you hit them and how much you want them to wash. If you want the sound to really wash, you don't want to hit a cymbal on the top. You want to give it more of a swipe on the side.

MD: Let's talk about the rest of your kit. What do you look for in a snare?

Jeremy: This time around, I ended up using a Joe Montineri 8"-deep snare drum in the studio. I had never used an 8" before. Most of my life I've played a 5" or 5½". But I used that 8" drum on most of the record. I fell in love with it, so I decided I'd play an 8" live too. It gives you that big rock sound. As for tuning it, though, I still like to crank it up.

My two rack toms are 8x10 and 9x12. I think for versatility and to cut through with the style of music we play, the drums need to be a little on the small side. I just ordered a new kit from Pearl. I kept the rack toms the same, but I made the floor toms two inches deeper. They'll be 14x14 and 16x16. I wanted more roundness out of the sound. The ones I'm using now are great, but I wanted more boom. I also ordered a bigger bass drum, an 18x24.

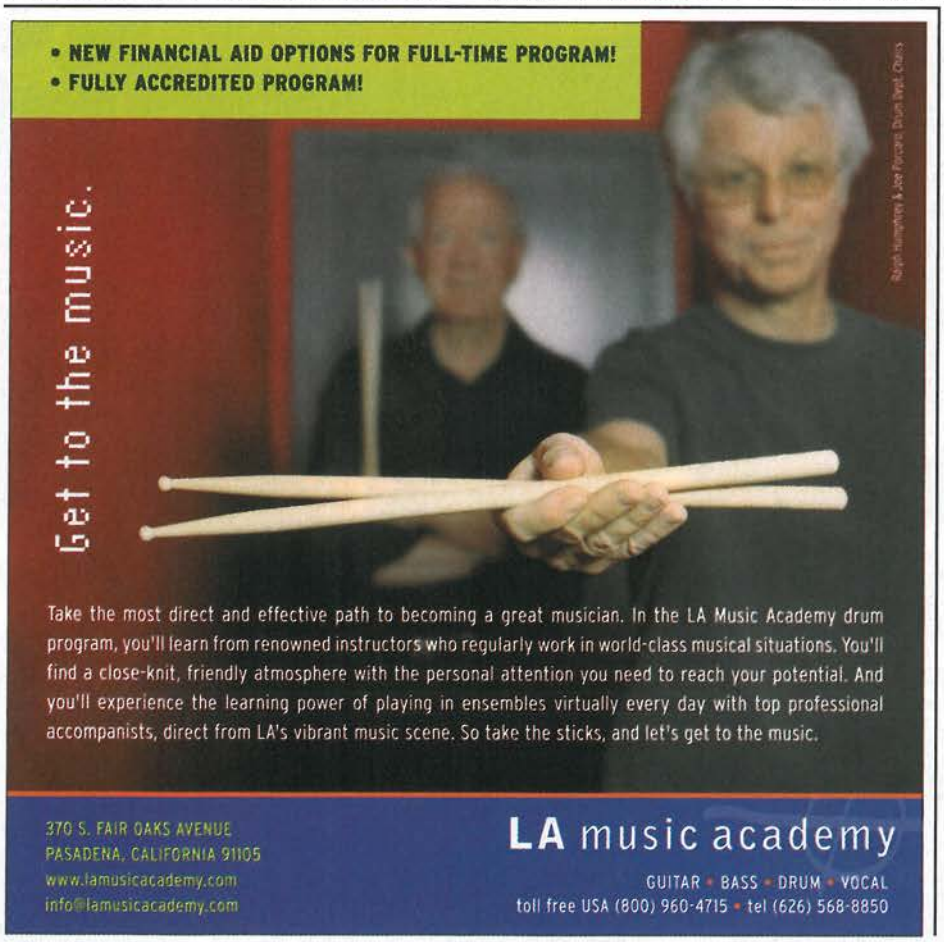
MD: Any other equipment changes?

Jeremy: I've been using a rack the past few years, but my tech has talked me into going with stands. We were going to get a riser, but he said, "Dude, the stands look cooler and will make your kit look bigger." I said, "Hey, you're the tech. If you want to set up the stands, go ahead!" So we have to give my tech Jay Ballinger some props.

Also, I've already said that when we start doing big headlining shows, I'm getting a gong. I think the gong needs to be brought back.

MD: How have you developed your double pedal technique?

Jeremy: That's one of the things I'm still trying to get better at. Growing up, I never worked at it a whole lot. I didn't start playing a double pedal full time until about five years ago. But I wanted to start. Most of the



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stuff you can do with your hands, you can do with your feet. You know, you read about guys who say that you should practice your paradiddles and all that stuff with your feet as well.

Lately when I'm playing with both pedals, especially if it's quicker stuff, I don't have to play them with as much force as I used to. I've been noticing that you want to have a little more finesse with your bass drum work. So now when I'm working on ideas with both pedals, I try to ease up a little bit. This can be tricky, because you're playing something heavy and you want to throw something subtle in, but you have to finesse it.

MD: Is there anything else that you're working on?

Jeremy: One thing I've been pondering since last summer is that I've never taken a drum lesson. I'm completely self-taught. So now I want to take some lessons. There are a lot of things that I know I can practice and develop by myself. But I feel that if I took a lesson from a very good teacher, a top-notch guy like Joe Morello, it could open up something for me that I've been missing. It's just a matter of finding the time.

MD: How do you prepare for a tour?

Jeremy: The one thing I've gotten into over the past two years is exercise. I love running. I try to run all the time, whether I'm at home or on tour. It's almost even better on tour, because you have hours with nothing to do.

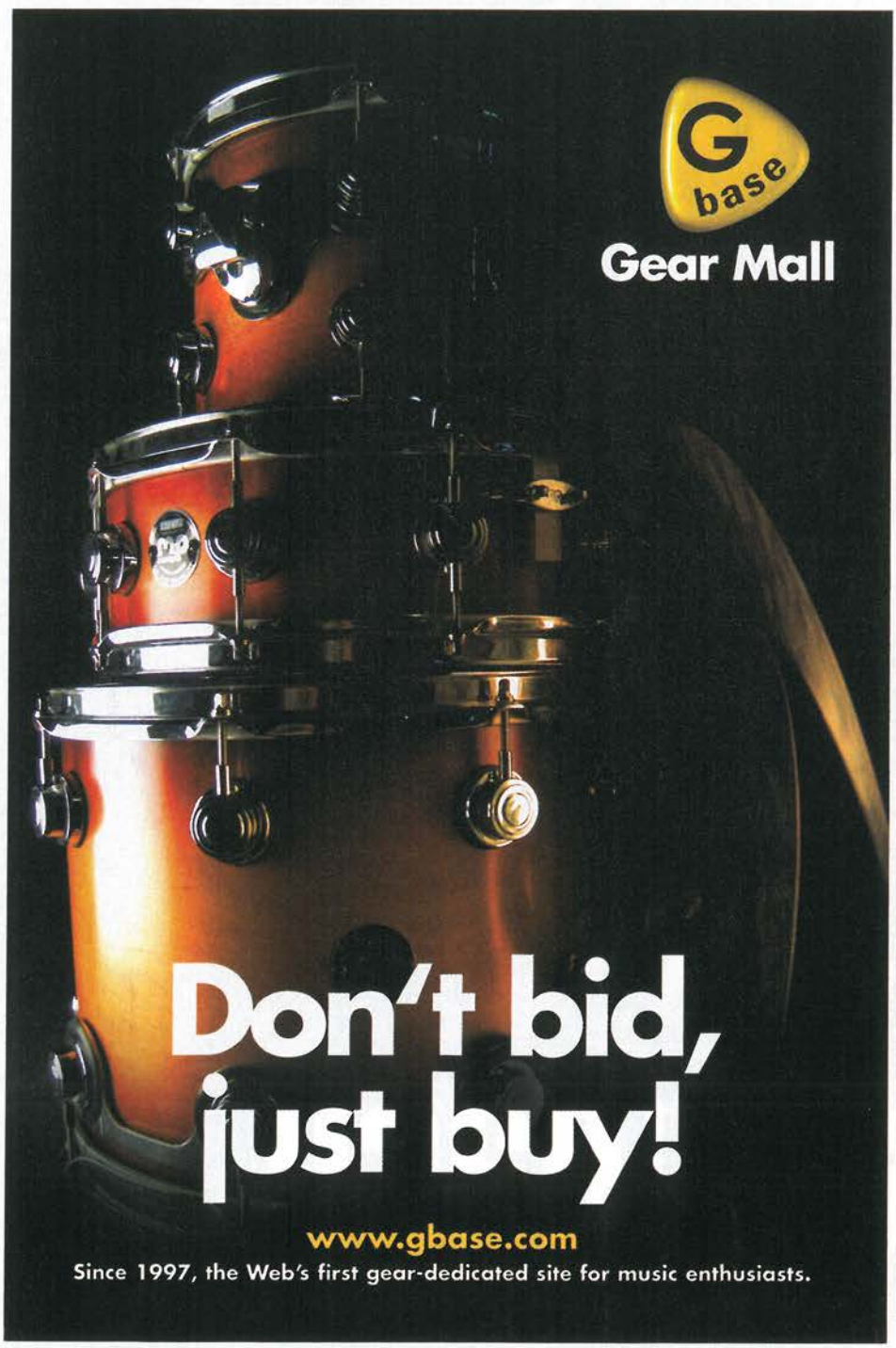
As far as warming up, if we're playing five nights in a row or something like that, I just take ten or fifteen minutes before the show. But if we haven't been playing that much, I take longer. I sit down and do rudimental stuff, not on a pad, but on a pillow or a more cushy surface. And I play around with my feet, doing things like alternating triplets. And I stretch *a lot*. I'm big on stretching, which you have to do in order to play a big rock show. That's pretty much it—stay in shape, warm up, and stretch. I also try to eat healthy.

MD: Was there anything you learned about touring last time that you'll apply this time?

Jeremy: Spending that much time together, we all know how not to piss each other off. You have to learn how to deal with people. Everybody's different, and you might be able to deal with one guy in a certain way, but another guy is different. I learned that when I taught drums.

I don't want anyone to take this the wrong way, but I also learned not to take things too seriously. The first time around, we had a lot of expectations—not only the band, but the record company and the management. Everybody involved had a lot of expectations about how successful we should be and how many records we should sell. When you're focused on that, you don't enjoy it as much because you're too concerned with where you are and why.

We're very fortunate because there have been a lot of bands that have come and gone since we put out our first record. They lost their record deal, broke up, or whatever. So I got to the point where I said, if I can make my living playing music, that is very, very cool. That's a blessing. So I try to go out there and have fun, because it's a fantastic job.



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Killswitch Engage

Playing Heavy, Having Fun

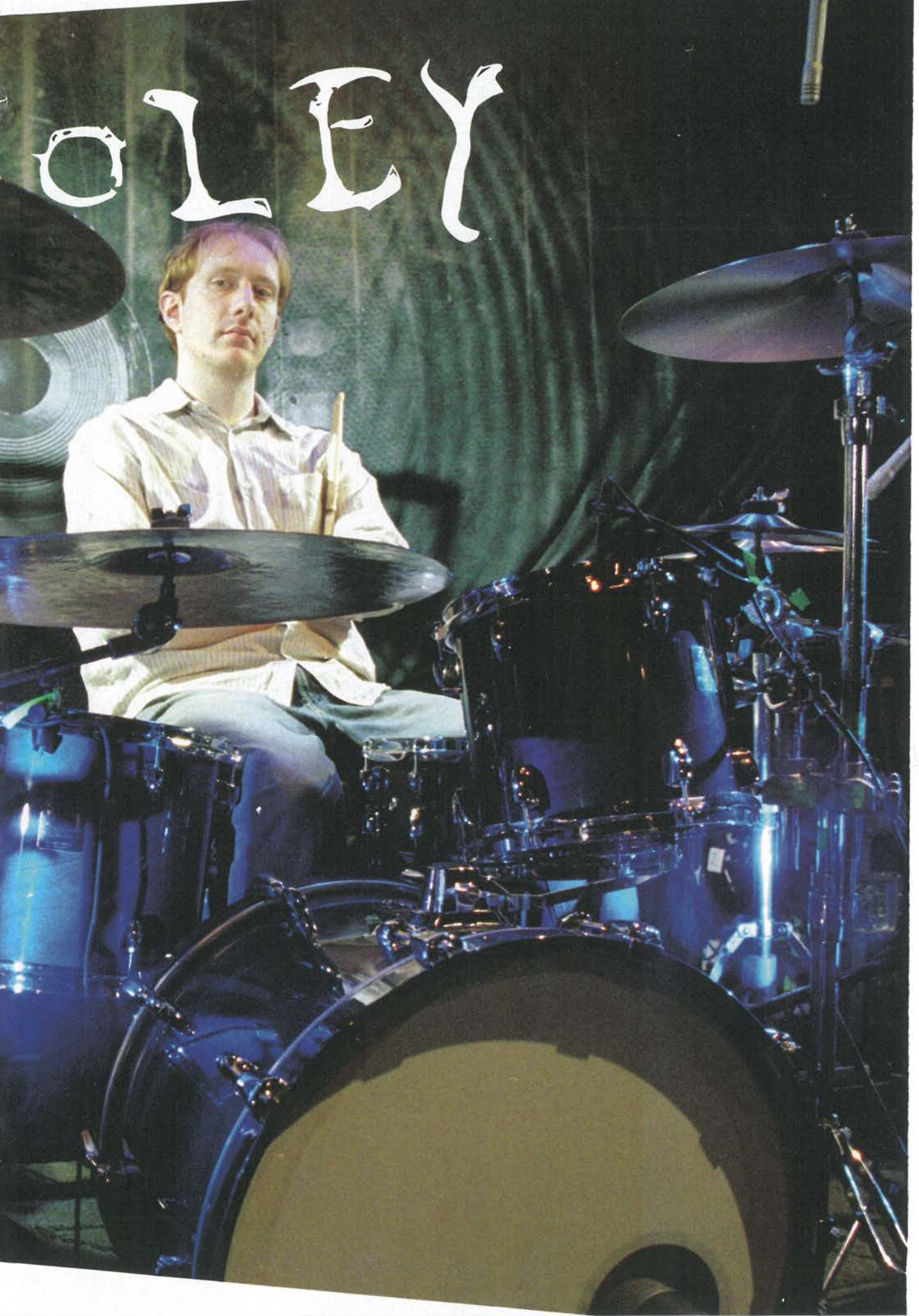
Justin Foley was hungry for a challenge. He knew that Killswitch Engage had already established themselves as an extremely tight, road-tested metal band, and that it wouldn't be easy settling in as their new drummer. "They'd done an incredible amount of touring together," Foley explains, while lounging in a dank backstage room before a Killswitch gig at Manhattan's Roseland Ballroom. "And trying to fit in, right away, with musicians that are so tight, can be difficult."

Still, some of the pressure *was* alleviated because Foley is such a monstrous player. It also helped that he wasn't the only new member joining the Massachusetts metal group. One of his buds, singer Howard Jones (no, not the '80s synth-pop crooner)—who still works with Foley in the extreme-metal unit Blood Has Been Shed—is also relatively new to the band.

Killswitch's new blood can be heard loud and clear on the band's pulverizing yet curiously melodic third album, the buzz-worthy *The End Of Heartache*. Foley replaced touring drummer Tom Gomes, yet he also succeeded, in a sense, Killswitch guitarist/producer Adam Dutkiewitz, who happens to still be in the band. Here's the deal: Besides playing guitar and producing Killswitch's first two albums—2000's self-titled affair and 2002's *Alive Or Just Breathing*—Dutkiewitz also drummed on those discs. But right now, it's all about Foley.

Story by Jeff Perlah

Photos by Therese McKeon


OLEY

On stage at Roseland, where Killswitch performs a sledgehammer-heavy yet surprisingly comedic gig (it opens with the boys imitating *Saturday Night Live*'s Blue Öyster Cult-with-cowbell spoof), Foley's chops almost seem too brawny and intimidating for his diminutive four-piece Yamaha Custom Absolute kit. "I think people are really surprised by the small size of my drumset," Foley says. Well, whatever works for you, Justin.

Let's hear more about Foley's role and how it coincides with Killswitch's smoldering mixture of brutal thrash, melodic Swedish-flavored metal, hardcore, and chuckle-inducing stage antics.

MD: When did you join Killswitch Engage, and how did the recording sessions go?

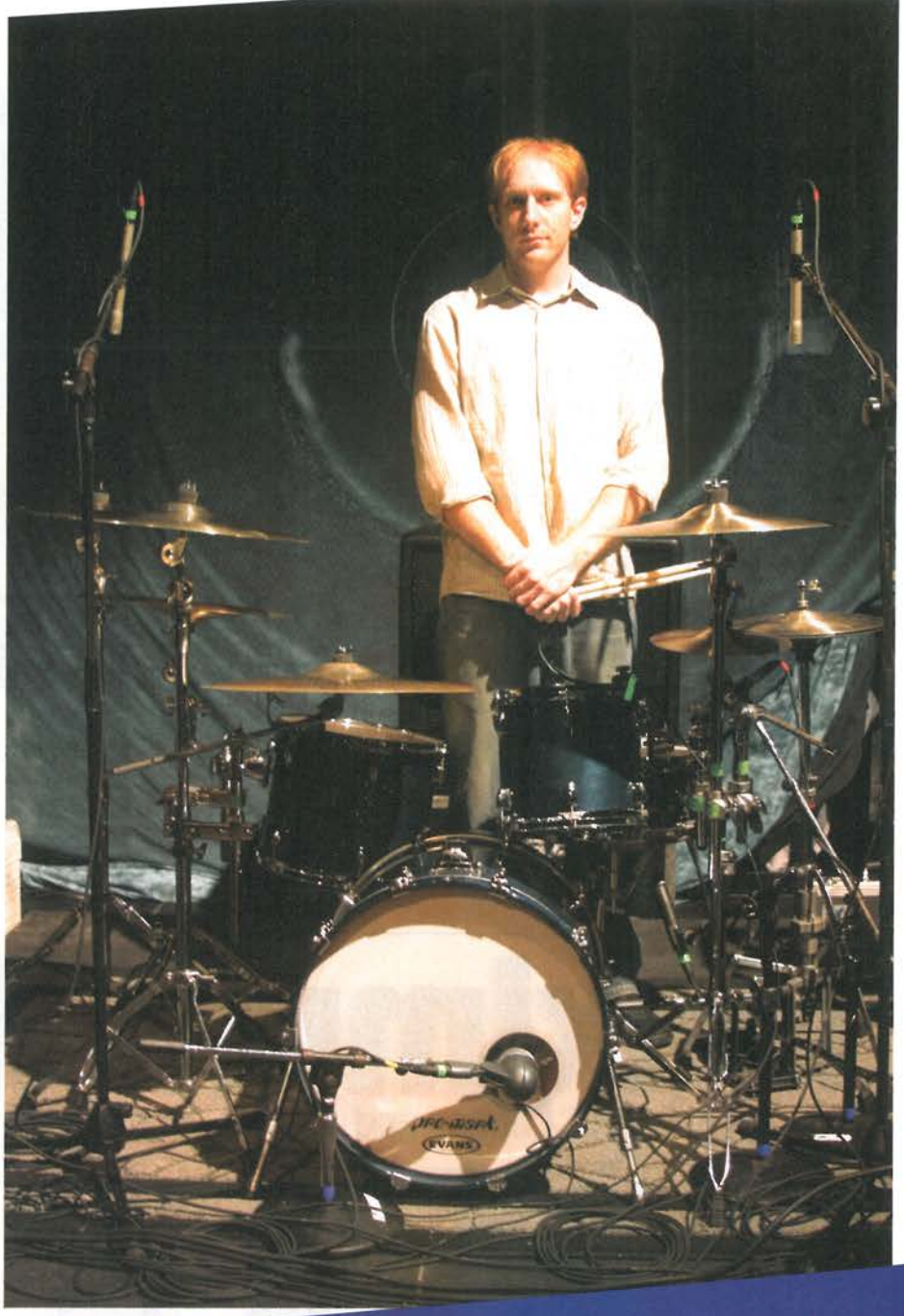
Justin: I joined in September of 2003. We did the *Headbanger's Ball* tour, and by December we were recording a new album. The first thing recorded was drums. I played along to one scratch track of guitar. The guys had demoed a lot of songs with drum machines, and we also rehearsed the songs, so I knew how to play everything. Basically I was playing the parts onstage until I got comfortable with them, and then I could throw some things in live and in the studio. The guys were really cool and receptive to any ideas I had. They're not intimidating to begin with. But I didn't want to throw in a bunch of crap that didn't fit, because I obviously have a tremendous amount of respect for Killswitch's music.

MD: Anything particularly crazy happen during the sessions?

Justin: Well, Zing Recording Studios [in Westfield, Massachusetts] freaked me out. Apparently, someone working there held a séance one night to try and bring his father back, and ever since then there's been some creepy stuff going on. I remember doing the drums one night and getting weirded out by these shadows I was seeing. I was getting very nervous. I'm being absolutely serious. It definitely felt strange.

Also, I was broken down by our producer and guitarist, Adam. He's really demanding, and it didn't go as smoothly as I wanted it to go, because I'm quite a perfectionist.

MD: Killswitch blends various styles of metal. And considering the band is currently



Killin' Gear

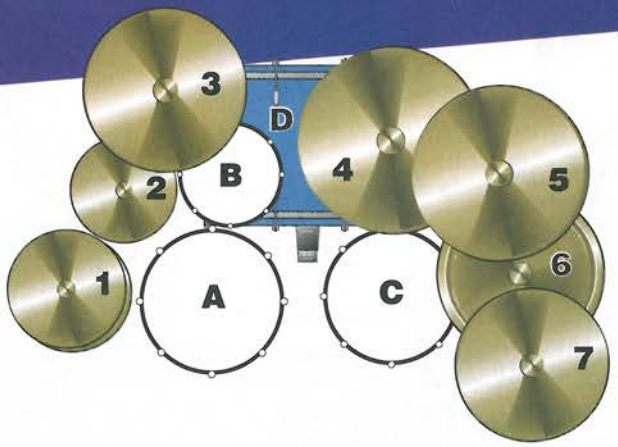
Drums: Yamaha Custom Absolute in sea blue finish
- **A.** 5½x14 snare (maple)
- **B.** 9x10 tom (birch)
- **C.** 11x13 tom (birch)
- **D.** 16x20 bass drum (maple)

Cymbals: Zildjian
1. 13" K/Z hi-hats
2. 10" A splash
3. 17" A Custom crash
4. 20" K Custom ride
5. 19" A Custom crash
6. 17" K Custom Dark China
7. 16" A Custom Projection crash

Hardware: Yamaha stands, Tama Iron Cobra double pedal with Pearl beaters (with medium spring tension)

Heads: Evans Power Center Reverse Dot on snare batter (tuned tight with no muffling), Hazy 300 snare-side, clear G2s on tom batters, clear Genera G1s on bottoms (heads tuned to same pitch, about a 4th apart between two toms, no muffling), EQ3 on bass drum batter with white EQ3 on front (both tuned low, no muffling, and with Evans double kick pad on batter head)

Sticks: Pro-Mark 5B model (hickory with wood tip)



Justin Foley

on tour with Sweden's In Flames, any thoughts about Killswitch's Swedish-metal leanings?

Justin: The thing that comes to mind is the melodic aspect of that kind of metal. Swedish metal can be very melodic. And when Killswitch takes that approach, it's one of the things I love. I enjoy heavy music very much, yet I think it can be a limiting style. I do think there are certain aspects of music, certain emotions, that work really well when brought out by a very good heavy band.

And if a heavy band is truly on top of it—the way, say, Dillinger Escape Plan is—they can really bring out emotions that you can't find in other kinds of music. When you do heavy music right, it's very intense and passionate. I also think that if you're not careful, it's possible for it to be

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a very stale sort of music. That's why I listen to so many different types of music.

MD: What drummers have influenced your playing?

Justin: I went through a few phases early on. John Bonham was first. I got into drumming by playing to Led Zeppelin albums in my basement. Neil Peart was second, and Dave Lombardo was third. Then I really got into a guy named Sean Reinert from the bands Cynic and Death; Sean played on Death's *Human*. After that was Kenneth Schalk from Candiria. Sean and Kenneth's styles got me interested in hearing a lot of jazz players. And I'm a big Dave Grohl fan right now. His power and aura are just incredible. When he plays, everyone is fixated on him. It's rare that drummers have that kind of power over people.

MD: Did you practice a lot when you first started tackling the drums?

Justin: I definitely practiced a lot, but I felt drumming was something I could do well. I always thought I was better at playing drums than I was at all the other things I did, including sports. I obviously put tons of time into drumming, yet it still always seemed I got the most rewards and showed the most improvement when I was doing it. One of the things I really appreciate about drumming is that it's very physical. It's almost athletic. I was always drawn to that part of it.

MD: What advice would you give to beginning drummers?

Justin: Besides the obvious thing—*practice*—I would say, never get fixated on one style of music playing-wise or listening-wise. Always listen to and play as many styles as you can. Even if you end up playing one style, all of your other influences will put a unique twist on it and make a difference.

MD: Let's hear about that small drumkit of yours.

Justin: I have a 20" bass drum, a 10" rack tom, a 13" "floor" tom, and a 14" snare. I use a double kick pedal. Way before I joined Killswitch, I was playing with heavy bands, and we never played through P.A.s. I found that large toms got completely lost in the thickness of the music and that smaller toms tuned low would cut through much better. Now I'm playing places with good P.A.s and the small toms still sound great coming through. I've had people tell me that it doesn't sound as if I'm playing a four-piece. I guess that's good.

I prefer not having too many toms right now, because when you have lots of them, they kind of dictate the way you play. They kind of make you do the whole top-to-bottom thing; you can easily fall into that trap.

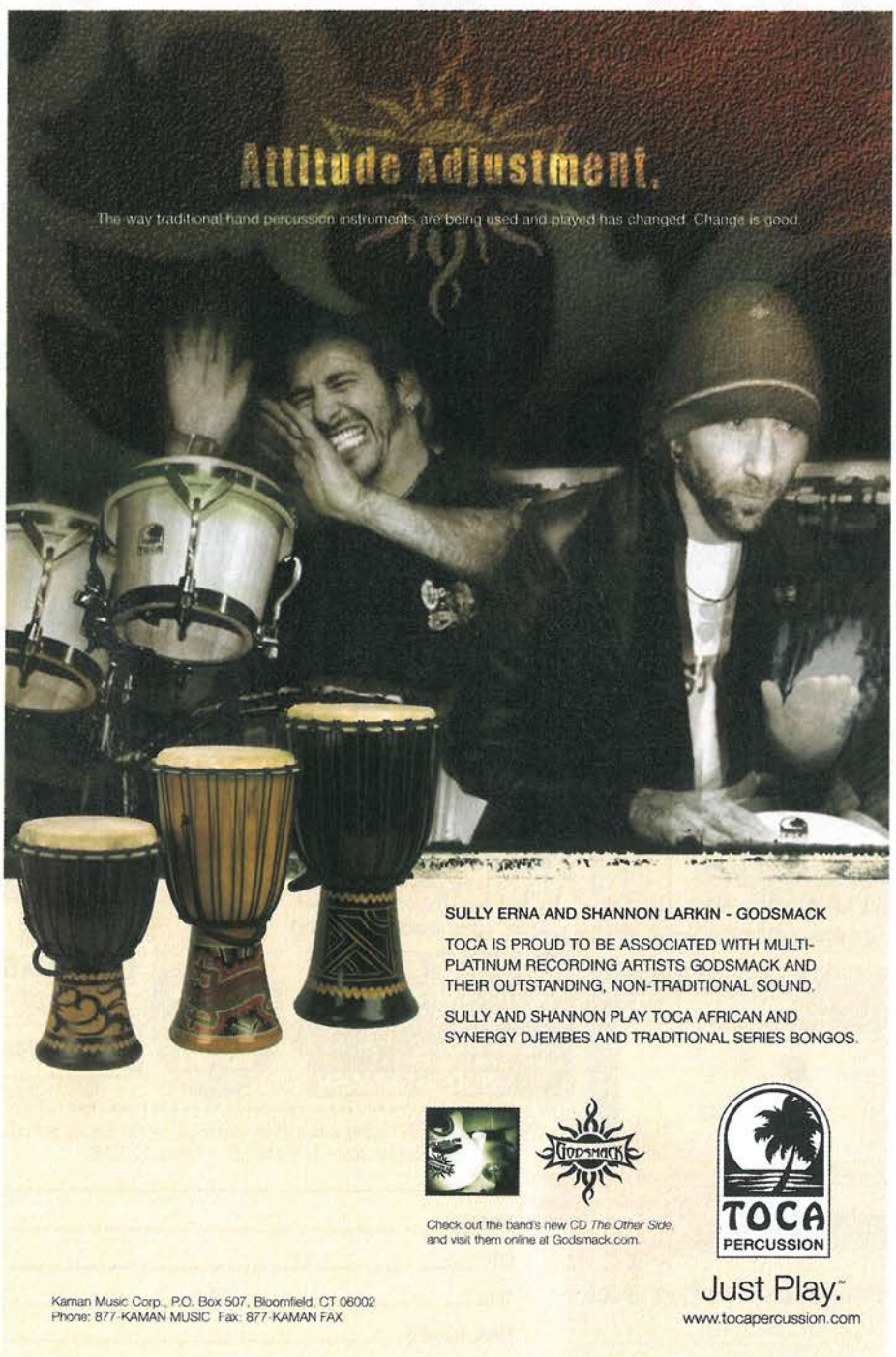
MD: Have you ever used a very large kit?

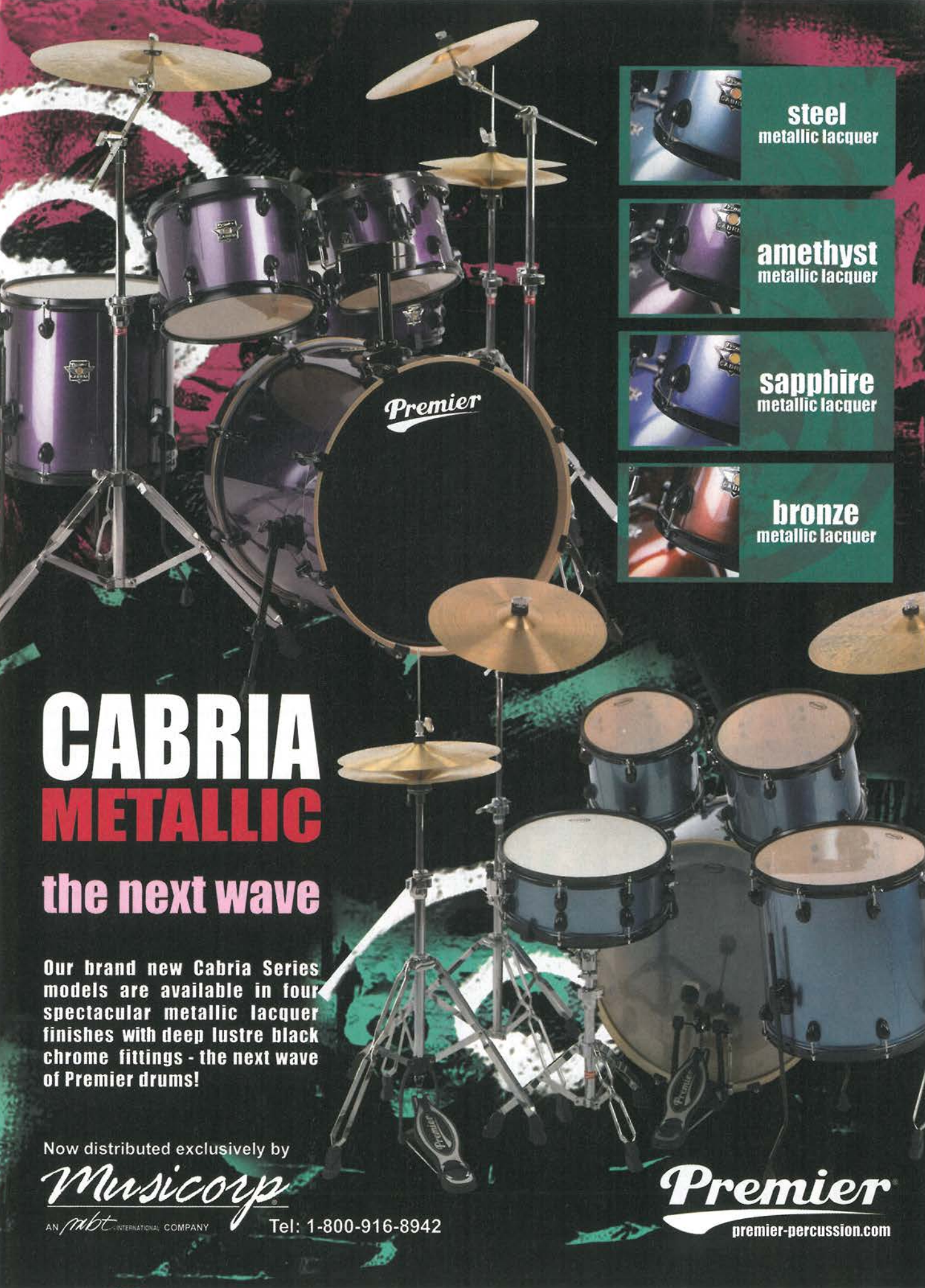
Justin: Absolutely. When I was in a jazzy metal band called Red Tide, I had enough toms so I could play one of the famous fills on Rush's *2112* the right way. And then I went, "Alright, that's all the toms I need." I eventually got fed up with lugging around and setting up all that equipment. I was thinking, "I don't need all of this stuff. I can still play the parts I want to play, and it'll be easier."

Plus, when you're playing really tiny places, a big drumset isn't going to work. Those are the main reasons my kit shrunk all the way down to a four-piece.

MD: Do you incorporate a lot of cymbal work in your playing?

Justin: Yes I do. I have a good mix of cym-

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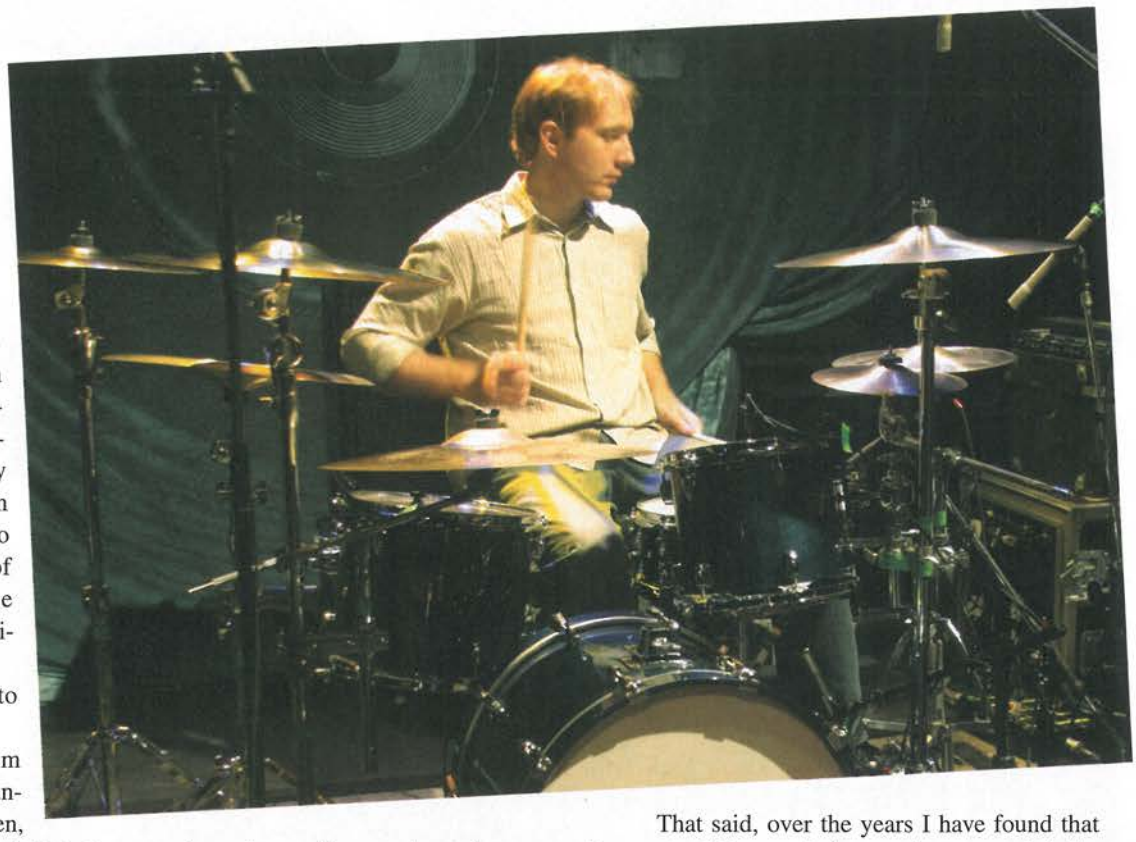

cymbals. I incorporate cymbals in a lot of the fills I play.

MD: Is your seat positioned high, low, or at a normal height?

Justin: It's pretty normal now. My knees are just a little bit above a right angle when I sit normally, and I'm 6'1". I used to sit ridiculously high. I was almost standing up. I thought I could play more consistent bass drum that way. Now I've gone to the extreme opposite end of the spectrum and have the seat set as low as it can possibly go.

MD: Do you do anything to stay in shape for drumming?

Justin: I wish I did more. I'm terrible when it comes to running. I try every now and then, but it just hasn't stuck. But I think it can definitely help your cardio and endurance.

When I was in high school and going through my Slayer phase, I was running like crazy. I'm convinced my feet have never been as fast as they were back then. That said, over the years I have found that stretching out before performances is helpful.

On this current tour, I said, "Alright, I'm doing a lot of playing, so I'm going to do a pretty good warm-up routine for about thirty minutes before our set." But about a week and a half ago, my left forearm started to really bother me. I think I was actually overworking it from the warm-up. So I cut out about seventy percent of it, and my forearm has been much better ever since. I think you can overdo it. Now I do an open-roll exercise and stretch out my arms—nothing too serious or strenuous.

MD: What about getting ready for gigs mentally?

Justin: Mentally…hmmm…I haven't quite figured that out yet. That's a really tough one.

MD: When performing live, do you ever approach parts differently from the way they're recorded?

Justin: I've tried to do that in Killswitch, but it's very hard. It's been easier in my other band, Blood Has Been Shed, whose extreme format allows that kind of approach a bit more. It's something I'm wrestling with in Killswitch—trying to add more improvisational elements. It's getting a little frustrating, truthfully, but I'll figure it out.

MD: Let's talk about your chops a bit. Are

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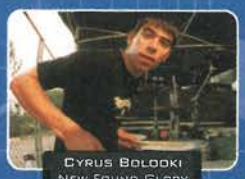
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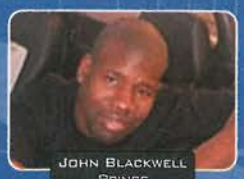
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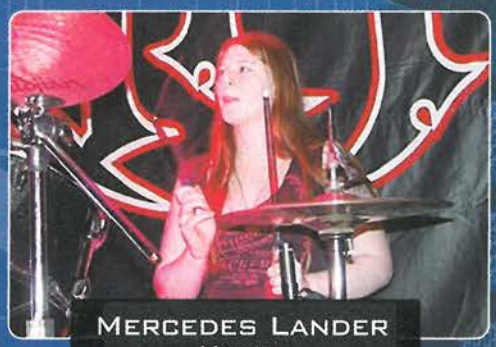
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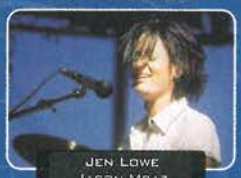
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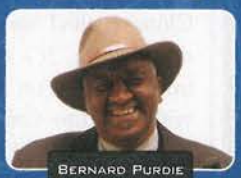
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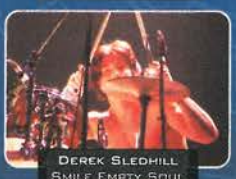
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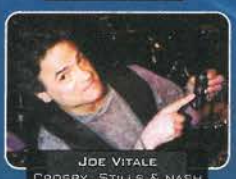
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there any rudiments you're especially fond of?

Justin: The Swiss Army triplet is a good rudiment. It's pretty cool to split the flam on it in between two different instruments. For example, split the flam at the beginning of the Swiss Army and play with one hand on a tom and the other on a snare, or one hand on a crash and one hand on a tom. It's an easy thing to do that can sound really neat.

MD: *The End Of Heartache*'s opener, "A Bid Farewell," certainly features some dynamic drumming.

Justin: That song has some interesting rhythms. Early on there are two time signatures going on at the same time—sort of a hemiola—while I play a bass drum pattern. And there's also a pretty fast blast beat in the song. The fourth track, "Rose Of Sharyn," which is also the first video from the album, is a straight-forward rock tune. I was proud that I was able to really drive that song forward.

MD: The lovely acoustic instrumental "Inhale" leads into the furious intro fill of "Breathe Life," which also contains some kick-ass drumming.

Justin: It starts with that really fast fill and then goes into a rapid thrash beat. By the time you get to the chorus, there's a beat that we really slow down by cutting it in half three different times.

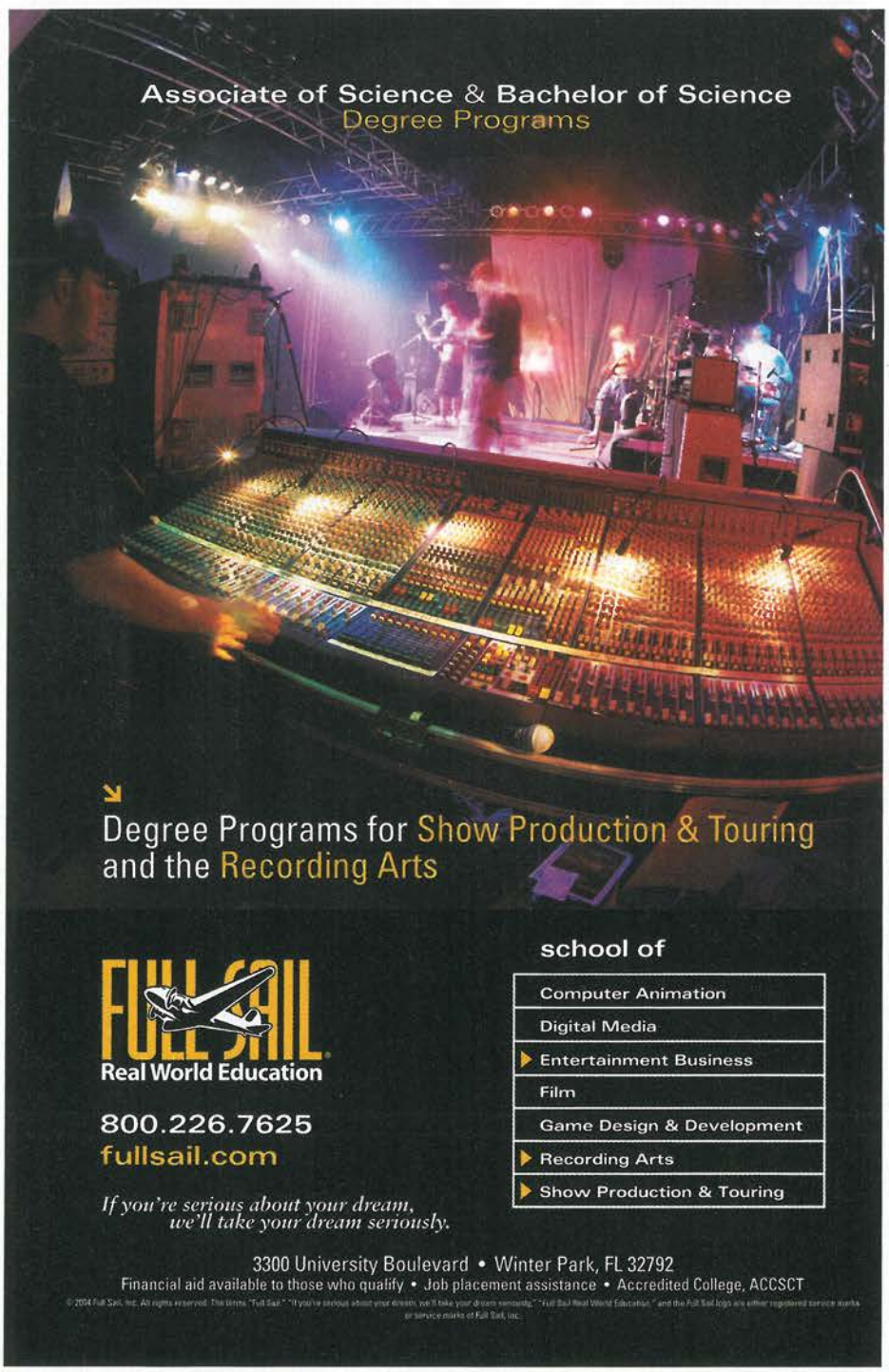
MD: Then there's the cool groove in "Declaration."

Justin: That song is probably the most double bass–heavy song on the album. At the end, there's that beat where I'm riding a China cymbal and doing an off-time snare drum thing. It's a little different, a little unexpected. You kind of notice that part, with the slow China and snare not always on the 2 and 4 but kind of in the middle.

MD: On one hand, Killswitch pummel the eardrums on stage, but on the other, the group loves to have fun. I mean, look at the way Adam runs up and down the stage. He even ends up in the V.I.P. section! And that *Saturday Night Live* BÖC shtick is pretty funny.

Justin: When we do the *Saturday Night Live* imitation during "A Bid Farewell," the two guys that come out and play the cowbell are my drum tech, Josh Mihlek, and the guitar tech, Thomas Cavanaugh. There's actually a cowbell in that song, though it's very subtle. Sometimes we've had other people on tour with us come out and do the routine.

There's absolutely a sense of humor in this band. I think all of us, when we're just hanging out, are completely stupid with each other. We're always making jokes. If we were really angry on stage, it wouldn't be honest. We kind of go out there the same way we are all of the time, and I guess that's a little weird considering we're in a heavy band. But I think people can appreciate the fact that even though we're doing heavy music, we can still have fun. I think all the gloom in metal can be overbearing. We're not miserable people at all.



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Lostprophets'
Mike Chiplin
Start Something

by Ed Breckenfeld

The second album by Welsh rockers Lostprophets is a breakout hit on the strength of the smash single "Last Train Home." Despite their British heritage, the band's sound fits right into the modern Southern California school of melodic alt/metal. Mike Chiplin is a powerhouse throughout the disc, propelling the music with his intensity and a variety of cool drum parts. Here are some examples.

"We Still Kill The Old Way"

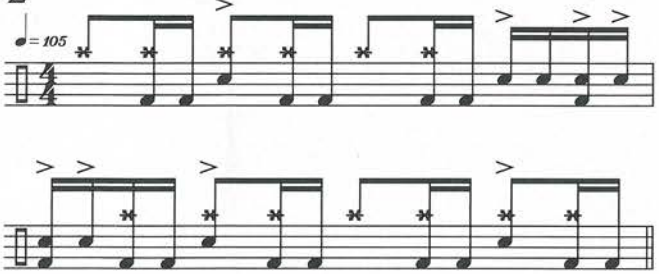
The intro groove of this tune kills with a convoluted kick and snare pattern. (0:26)

1

"To Hell We Ride"

A through-the-bar fill in this intro beat maintains the feeling of forward momentum. (0:06)

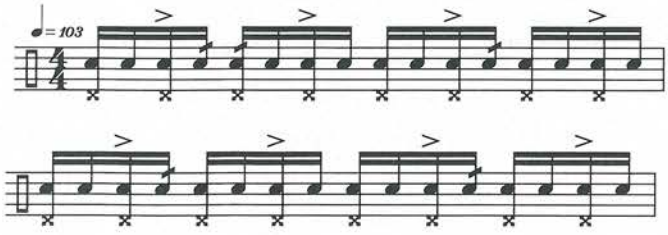
2



"Last Train Home"

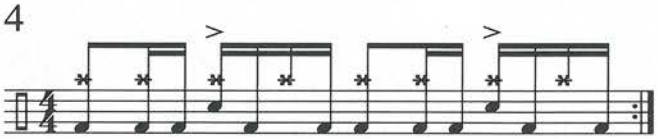
Mike's train beat gets the spotlight in the quiet verse of this hit song. Note his nice use of double strokes (represented by the slashes). (0:33)

3



The chorus brings the rock, of course. (1:27)

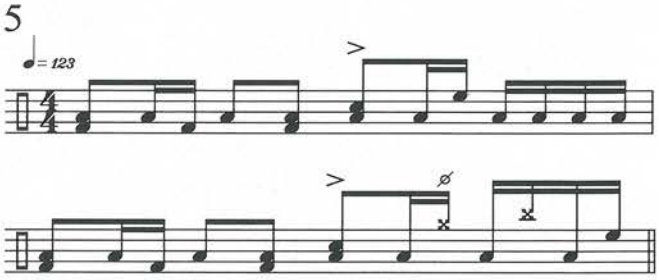
4



"Make A Move"

The breakdown section of this tune features the following floor tom groove, with a couple of interesting cymbal touches in the second measure. (2:35)

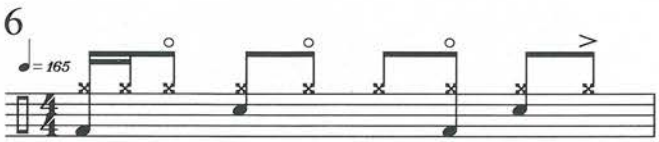
5

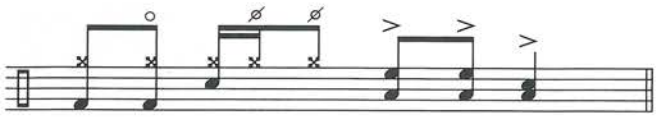


"I Don't Know"

Showcasing some versatility, Mike pulls off a ska-like feel for this one. (0:21)

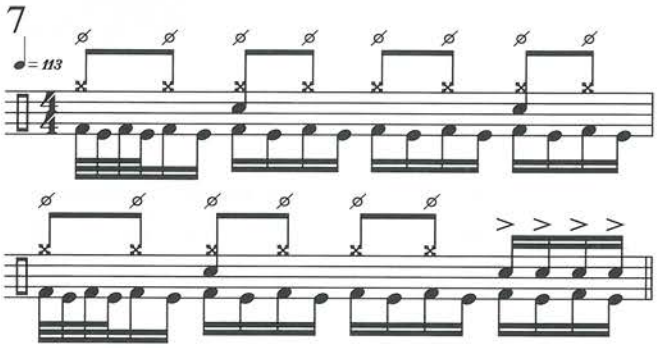
6





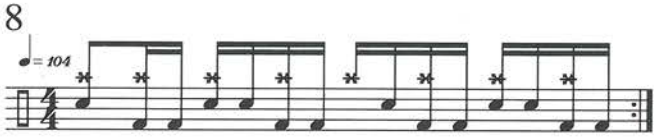
"Start Something"

It's back to the metal, with this ferocious kick pattern in the bridge of the title track. (1:22)



"A Million Miles"

Here's another great intro beat, with more of the Chiplin penchant for creative bass and snare groupings. (0:00)



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Reading Basics

Part 4: Dotted Notes And Rests

by Kelly Paletta

Hopefully you've been following this series with few problems so far. Things are about to get a little trickier. This month we're going to learn about dotted notes and rests, as well as tied notes. Let's jump in.

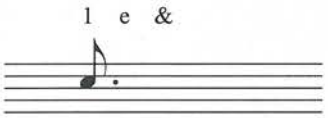
A dot next to a note indicates that the note's duration is one and a half times its original (un-dotted) value. A dotted 8th note is held for the value of an 8th note *plus* the value of a 16th note. To relate this to the 1e&a song, an 8th note takes the space of two syllables in the 1e&a song, therefore a dotted 8th note takes the space of three syllables (two syllables times one and a half).

In standard notation, here's an 8th note, which has one flag and takes up *two* syllables in the 1e&a song.

1

Here's a dotted 8th note, which has one flag plus a dot. It takes up *three* syllables in the 1e&a song (one and one half times two).

2



Right now you're probably thinking to yourself, "Why would I ever want to indicate one and a half times a note value, and how is anyone supposed to be able to multiply fractions while reading a piece of music for the first time?" Well, as you'll see, dots are very handy little devices. And you're right, you're not going to be able to do multiplication while sight-reading. But the truth is, you won't have to.

Just like reading letters on a page, reading music gets easier with repetition. The trick to quickly decoding complex notation like dotted notes is to become so familiar with them that you don't have to think about them when you see them. It helps that dotted notes are only used in a few rhythmic figures. The following are the most common examples.

Dotted 8th notes (combined with 16th notes):

3

4

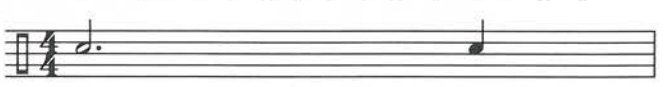
Dotted quarter notes (combined with 8th notes):

5

6

Dotted half notes:

7

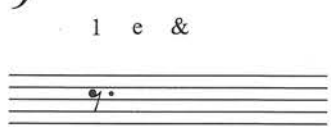


8

A dot has the same effect on a rest as it does on a note. It increases the duration of the rest by one half of its original value. Dotted rests can be hard on the eyes and on the brain, so they're

not used very often. The most common use of a dotted rest is a dotted 8th-note rest, which looks like this:

9



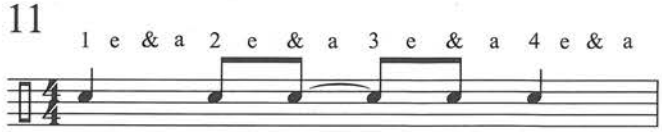
This Note Is Wearing A Tie!

Tied notes look a little funny at first, but they're actually pretty easy to decipher. As the name implies, tied notes are tied together. For instruments that sustain—like trumpet, voice, or saxophone—tied notes are played as follows: The first note is played and sustained through the duration of the note to which it is tied. The second note is not articulated. For instruments that do not sustain—a snare drum, for example—the convention is to tap the first note but not the note to which it is tied.

Examples 10–13 show a few figures that include tied notes.

10

11



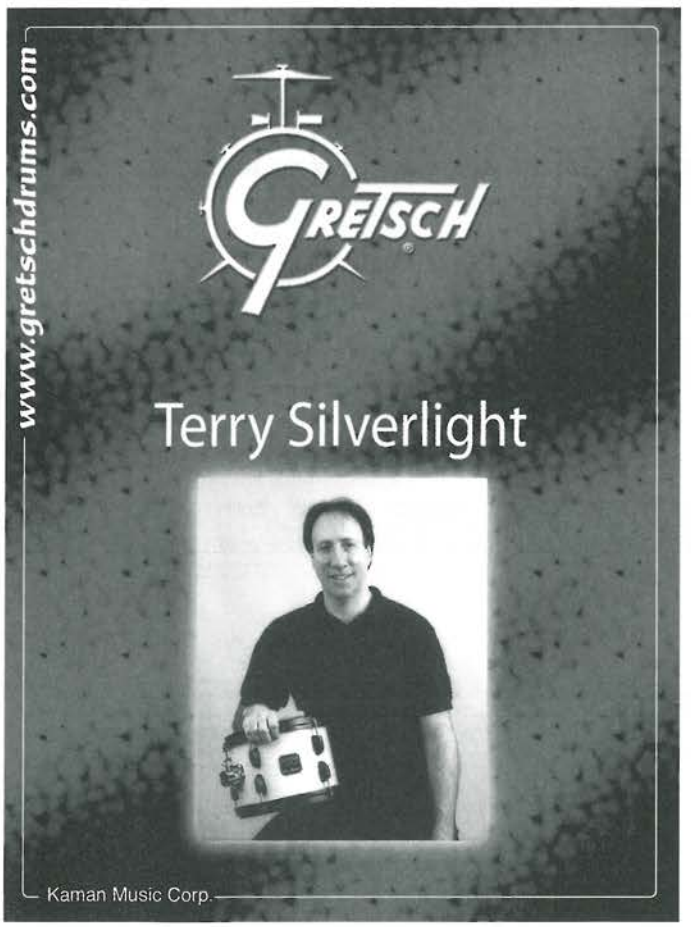
12

13

Finally, we have a piece that includes dotted notes and rests and tied notes. Be sure to count along. Some of the figures are pretty challenging.

14

Next month we'll be covering how the drumset is notated in music. See you then!



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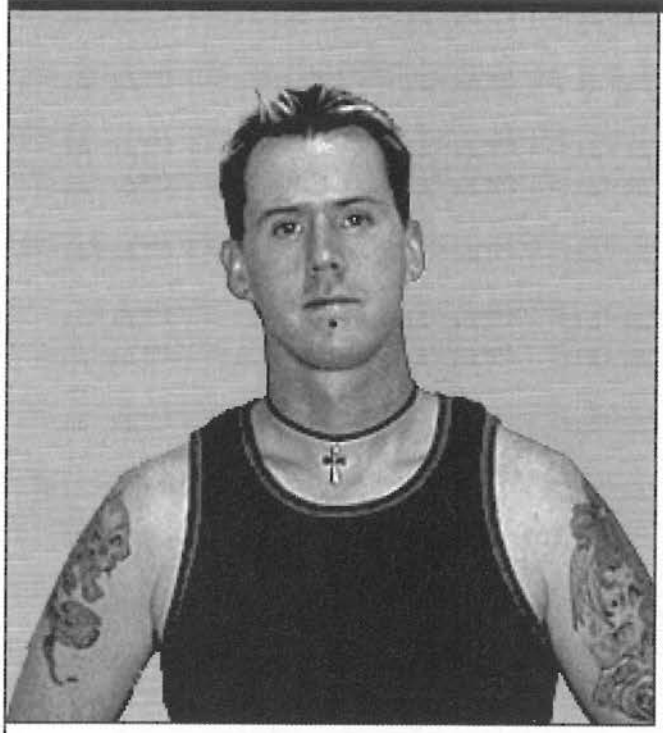

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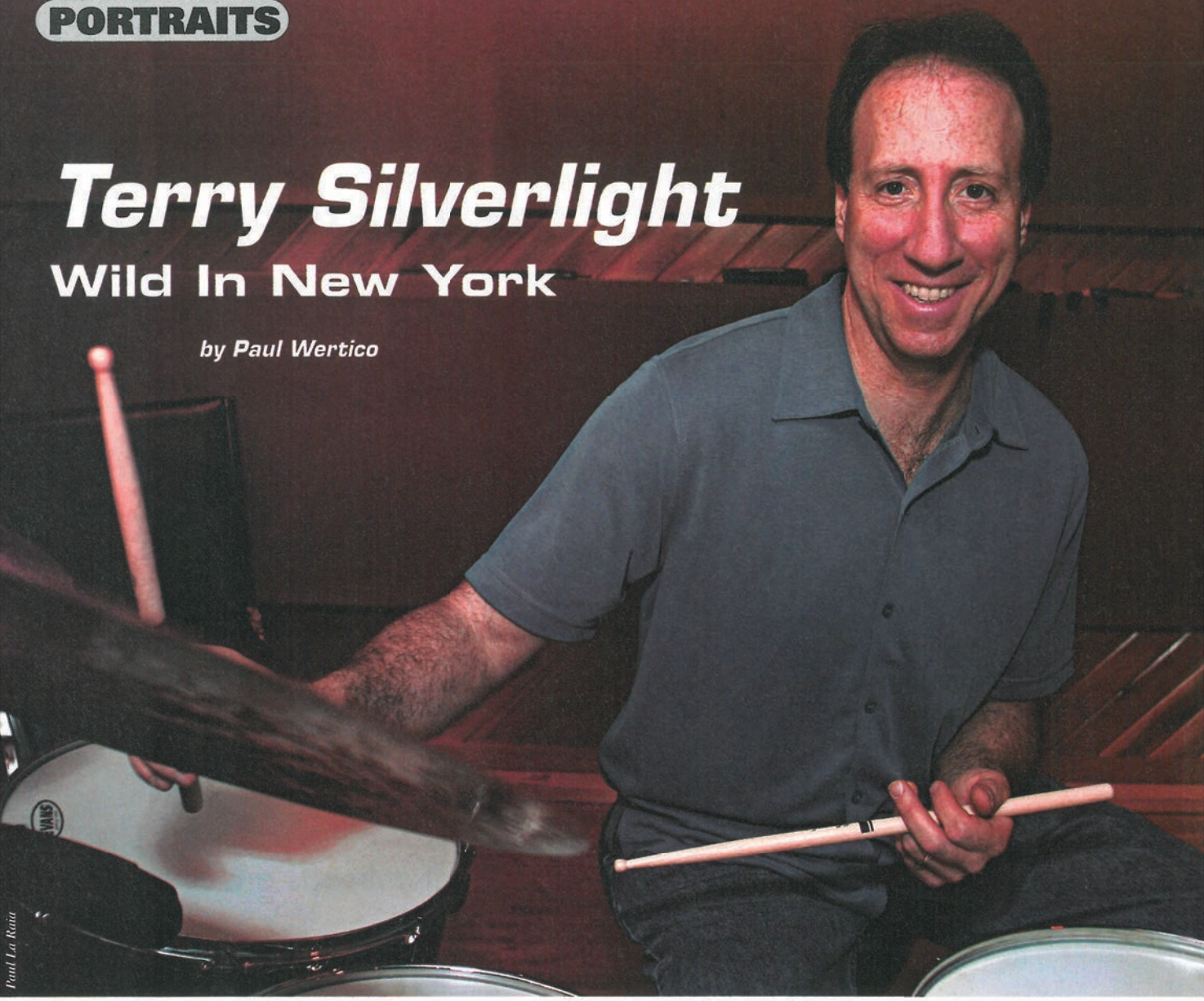
Terry Silverlight

Wild In New York

by Paul Wertico



Paul La Raia

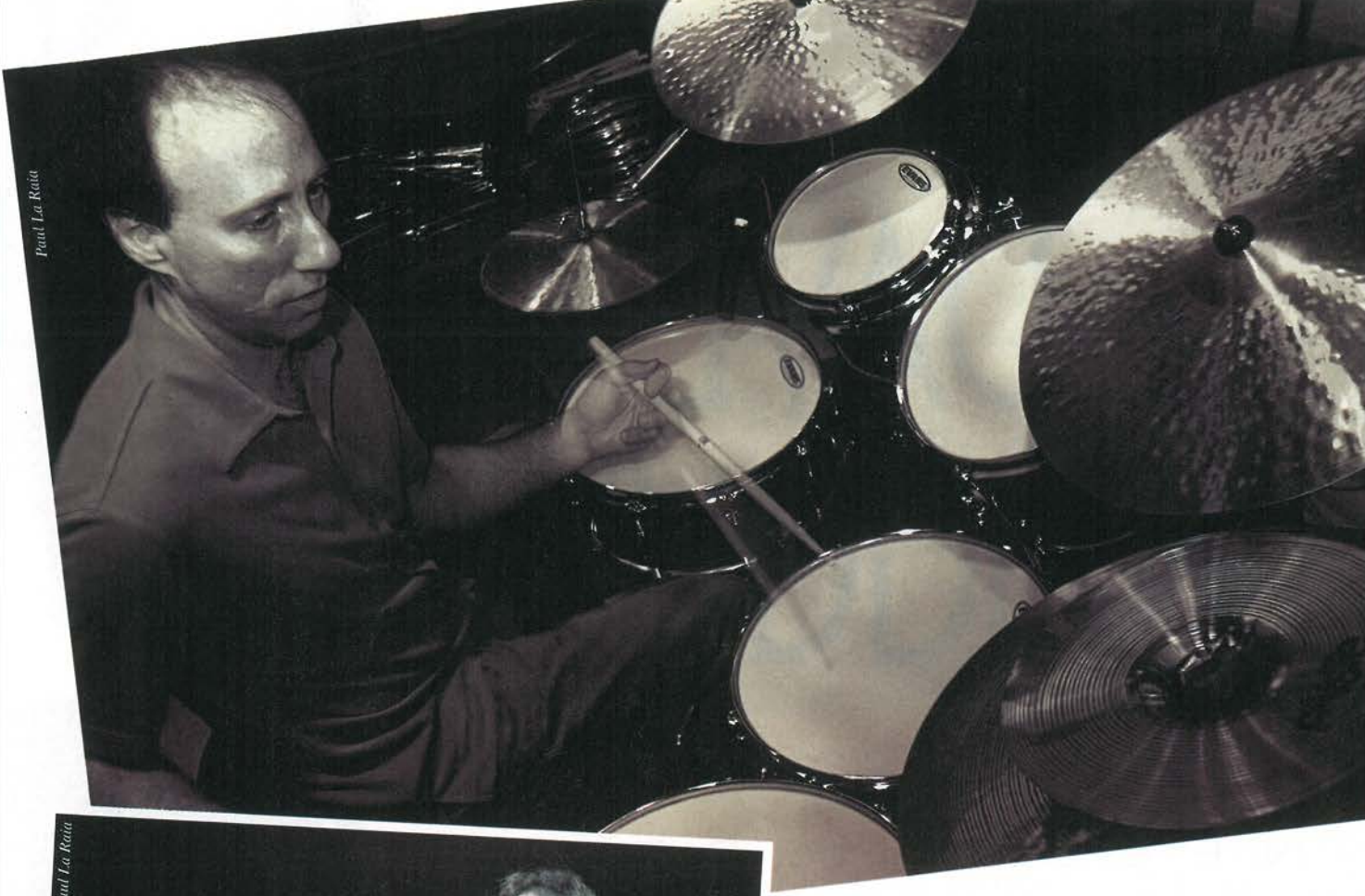
Terry Silverlight began his career at the tender age of fourteen, in a band called Barry Miles & Silverlight. The group, which also launched the careers of jazz greats Al Di Meola, Pat Martino, Lew Tabackin, and John Abercrombie, was one of the first to explore fusion territory.

Terry then shifted gears, becoming one of New York's busiest session drummers. He played on hundreds of film scores and jingles, as well as recordings by an impressive and stylistically varied list of artists. At the same time, Terry honed his writing skills, composing songs recorded by the likes of Nancy Wilson, Carl Anderson, and Philip Ingram. He's also written music for TV shows including *The Sopranos*, *Ed*, *JAG*, and *Seventh Heaven*.

Coming full circle, Terry just released his new CD, *WILD!!* It incorporates all of his experience as a drummer and a composer, and features an all-star musical cast. The CD gives the listener a taste of Terry's slamming grooves, unique drum solos, and mature interplay with soloists.

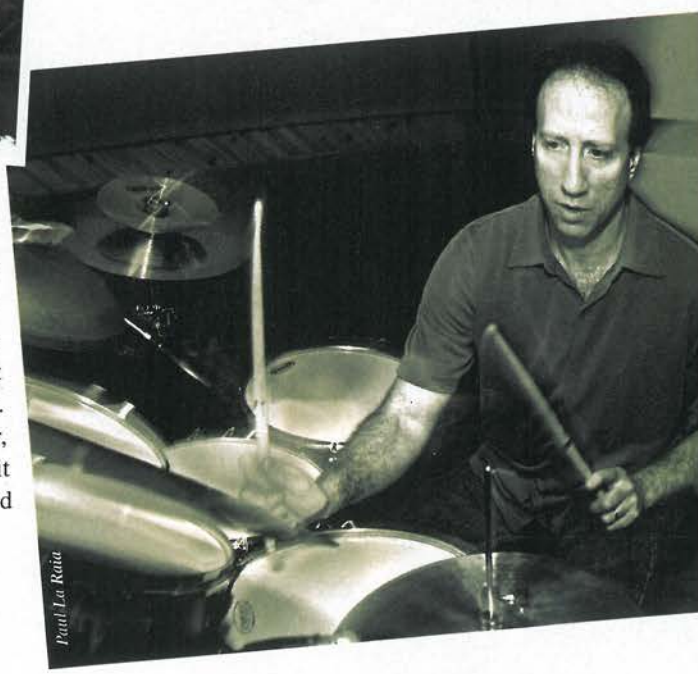
Terry also has an instructional book called *The Featured Drummer*, soon to be released by Music Sales Corporation. Offering challenging stickings and the development of four-way coordination, the book is accompanied by an audio CD of Terry playing the exercises along with John Patitucci and Barry Miles.

Given Terry Silverlight's jazz credentials, who better to interview him than another jazz drummer? In this case, it's Paul Wertico, whose own credits include many years as the driving force in Pat Metheny's band, and who now leads and records with his own group. Paul and Terry also happen to be good friends, which made the interview process an interesting experience for them both.


Paul La Raia

Paul La Raia

"Play for the moment and the occasion, not for your ego. Bring enthusiasm and support to every gig, and you'll always sound good."


Paul La Raia

Paul: What was your first exposure to music?

Terry: I was born into a musical family. My brother, Barry Miles, was established on the jazz scene as a drummer, pianist, and vibist by the time I was born. As a child prodigy in the late 1950s, he had played with Miles Davis, Billie Holiday, and Lester Young. At home, I was surrounded by his amazing collection of great jazz and classical records. Wonderful musicians were frequently at the house rehearsing in Barry's band, including Eddie Gomez, Richard Davis, Walter Booker, Lew Soloff, and Woody Shaw. While Barry practiced drums at home, I'd sit and watch. He was a great drummer, so I saw up close what it was supposed to look and sound like.

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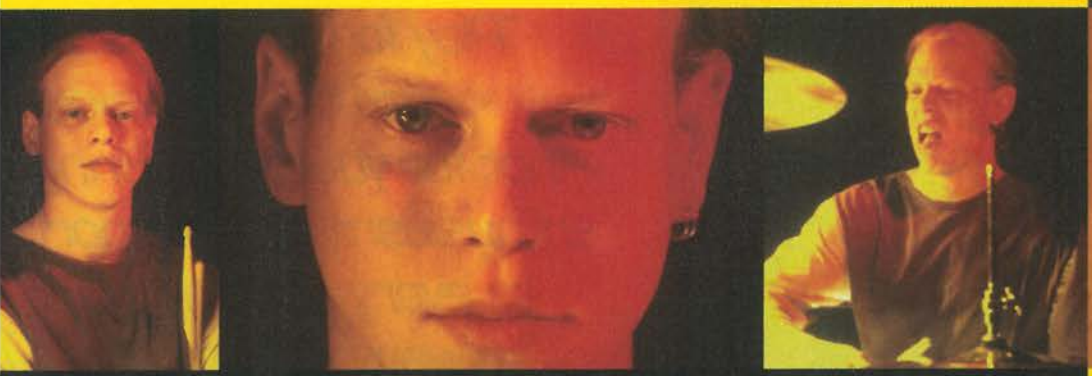

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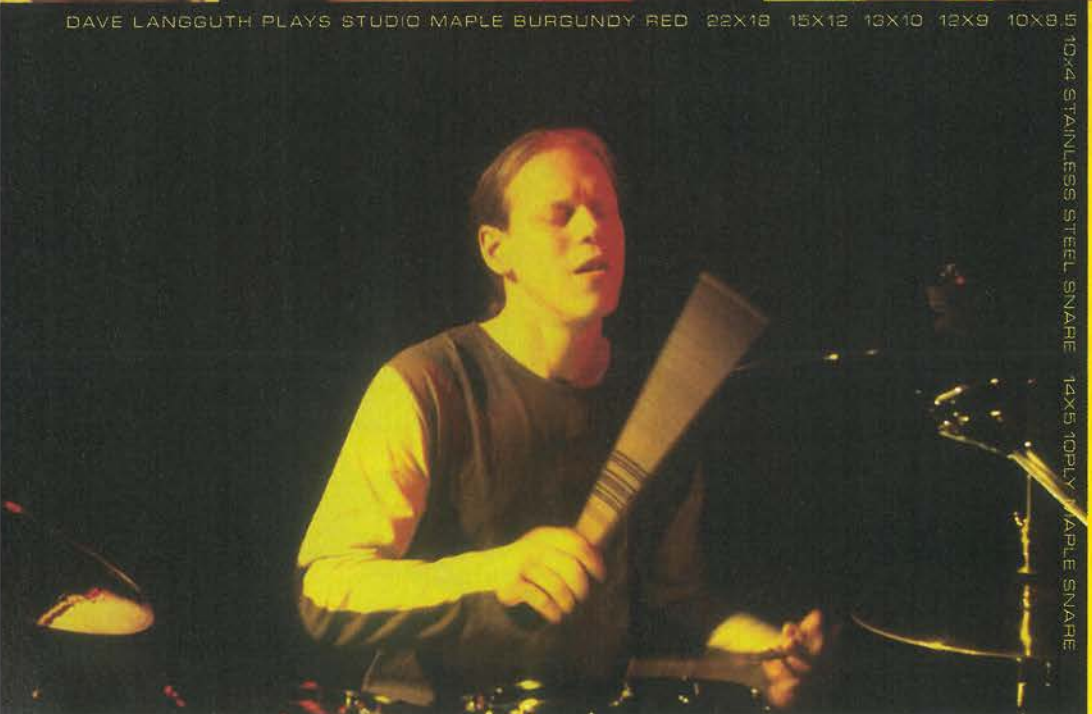

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Terry Silverlight

Paul: When did you make the transition from listener to player?

Terry: At the age of nine I started piano lessons—which later proved invaluable to me as a composer. At eleven, I gave my first performance on drums in my grammar school. Soon after, Barry began writing music for a new album, and he let me rehearse with him. In 1971, at the age of fourteen, I made my recording debut playing drums on Barry's *White Heat* album, which made an impact at the time among young musicians. In those days, except for Tony Williams, Jack DeJohnette, and a few others, most jazz drummers were still playing bebop style. The word "fusion" didn't exist, and the idea of combining funk, rock, Indian, or classical elements with jazz was barely considered.

I attended Princeton University for a while, but I left after realizing that continued involvement on the music scene and further studies in composition and drumming would be best for me. I played live in Phil Woods' quintet and recorded on his *Seven Deadly Sins* album, along with albums for Kenny Wheeler, Mel Tormé, Michel Legrand, and Eric Kloss. My first recordings outside of jazz were the CTI All-Stars album *Live At The Hollywood Bowl*, the Fania All-Stars' *Spanish Fever*, and Odyssey's *Native New Yorker*, which featured an all-star cast of producer Tommy Mottola and players Will Lee, Richard Tee, Michael and Randy Brecker, John Tropea, Cornell Dupree, and Hugh McCracken.

Paul: How did your career progress after you moved into Manhattan?

Terry: I began teaching at Drummers Collective, and I played numerous gigs with great musicians. I also formed my own band, which I wrote the music for. I played drums on over a hundred albums, for the likes of Freddie Jackson, George Benson, Jennifer Holliday, Melba Moore, Stephen Stills, Laura Nyro, Natalie Merchant, and Change. I recorded Billy Ocean's hits "Suddenly," "There'll Be Sad Songs," "Love Is Forever," and "Color Of Love." I drummed on film scores for *You've Got Mail*, *Object Of My Affection*, and *One Fine Day*, as well as for many TV shows and jingles. I also toured with Roberta Flack for a few years. And as a composer, I've been fortunate to have my songs recorded by many top artists, or included in TV and film scores.

Paul: Tell us about your new CD, *WILD!!*

Terry: I wrote all the compositions, and I co-produced it with Will Lee. It features Will on bass, along with Paul Shaffer, Edgar Winter, Hiram Bullock, Chuck Loeb, Lew Soloff, David Mann, Charles Blenzig, Mike Ricchiuti, and John Clark. It's a visit back to my early days, and it's a tribute to high-energy drumming. It's not only a fusion album, it also includes mainstream jazz, funk, blues, rock, and smoother grooves as well. My writing showcases the talents of the soloists, but it also features my drum soloing, which hasn't been documented much on records.

It's basically a live performance, with minimal overdubbing. I managed to capture uncompromised performances in a pristine recording environment at Avatar Studios. Anyone who's interested can visit my Web site at www.terrysilverlight.com to see where the CD is available.

Paul: Your book *The Featured Drummer* was first published in 1981, but is about to be re-released. How is the new version different from the original?

Terry: The new version is accompanied by an audio CD on which I'm playing all the exercises. There are four chapters of four-bar exercises grouped in patterns of threes, fours, fives, and sevens alternating with four bars of a groove. Each chapter has a different groove: samba, shuffle, funk, and 6/8.

Paul: The book features a lot of unusual stickings. How did you come up with those?

Terry: The exercises come from live playing situations. The typical role of the drummer is to provide a steady beat behind the soloist without getting in the way. But I find it refreshing to play with musicians who welcome interplay and the volleying of ideas and patterns back and forth. In these situations, I try to play patterns that sound complementary to the soloist's ideas. As I've done that over time, I've developed unique stickings and patterns, which are the basis of this book. Also, the reader is encouraged to pursue

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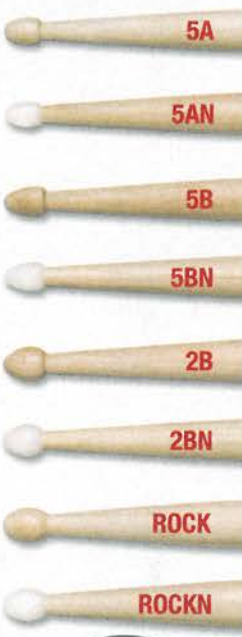

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the endless possibilities of how the patterns can be orchestrated around the drumset and with different stickings.

Paul: What got you interested in odd groupings and over-the-bar patterns?

Terry: Playing with my brother and some of the other great musicians that I got to play with in my early days. They were using unconventional rhythmic groupings. Also, I listened to Indian music—particularly the interplay between Ravi Shankar and Alla Rakha—and to the Miles Davis Quintet with Tony Williams and Herbie Hancock. They were masters at playing patterns extending over the barline. I also enjoyed the interplay between John McLaughlin and Billy Cobham in The Mahavishnu Orchestra, followed by McLaughlin's Shakti band.

Paul: Besides using these types of patterns in fills and solos, how else can they be applied?

Terry: As I said earlier, the traditional role of the drummer is to lay down a groove without overshadowing the rest of the band. And to be honest, most of the gigs I do fall into that category. If I had played any of the material from my book on the commercial projects I've played on, I would have been booted out in two seconds!

That's why I had the urge to record *WILD!!* The challenge was to incorporate interesting rhythmic interplay between the soloists and me. I chose musicians who are sensitive to this concept. Nevertheless, on this recording—and in general—I try not to play too busy or to show off complex patterns when it's not the right time.

Paul: How can a drummer keep from sounding "too clever" when playing these types of patterns?

Terry: It's a matter of discretion. Whether it's a complex pattern or a simpler fill, it's all about musical judgement and maturity. The structure of my book is to go from one exercise to the next. But if you're playing behind a soloist or orchestrating a composition, musical taste and sensitivity as to when or when not to play the patterns is of the utmost importance. You should always play for the moment, with respect for the music. If it feels as though one of my patterns would enhance the dynamics of the music at a given moment, use it. If not, play something that would be more appropriate.

Also, to play figures from the book without regard to dynamics and accents will make them sound robotic and stiff. It's fun to play figures that go over the bar, but it's all about playing them musically, and with shading. Orchestration around the entire kit with different stickings—instead of repetitiveness—colors the sound. Combining more than one pattern into a statement is also interesting. Mix it up a little. And as you'd approach any fill with a sense of swing and groove, so should you approach my patterns. The more musically relaxed they're delivered, the less clichéd they'll sound.

Paul: Your playing is extremely precise. Are there any tips you can suggest for obtaining such precision?

Terry: Being aware of whether you're playing precisely or not is the first step. Keep your ears open and monitor what you're playing in context with everyone around you. Determine if you're rushing or dragging, and whether you're executing beats and fills evenly or not. As a practice technique away from the bandstand, take one groove and play along to a click at a *very* slow tempo. Break the groove down into small pieces and repeat the pattern for as long as it takes until it's totally locked with the click. Besides concentrating on precision, play the pattern until it's smooth and relaxed. Once this is achieved, gradually increase the tempo one step at a time until the groove can be played up to tempo with the same precision.

Paul: Speaking of precision, you have a precise and distinctive sound. What gear are you currently using to achieve that sound?

Terry: I use Pro-Mark products because they have such a wide selection, and the stuff they make feels great. I think Paiste has the most precise cymbals on the market, and I use Evans heads because of their durability and rich tone. Finally, I play Gretsch drums because of their distinctive sound.

Paul: You have a lot of studio experience. What advice can you give aspiring drummers who want to follow in that direction?

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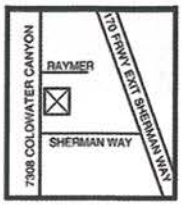

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Terry Silverlight

Terry: I was lucky to have had the opportunity to work with the best session musicians from the beginning of my career. I had enlightening experiences that taught me that there were other things in my playing that I had to get together. I went home and practiced reading and playing with a click. In today's work climate, with fewer sessions and places to play, it's more difficult to get real playing opportunities. But whether it be in the classroom or the basement, the same rules apply. Find the tools you need from books, teachers, and mentors, and practice hard. When an opportunity comes up, you'll be ready—and that'll lead to more opportunities. It's also helpful to live in an area where the most sessions are done and the great players convene. That's why I moved to Manhattan early on.

Paul: What drummers, musicians, and recordings have had the most influence on you?

Terry: I've kept an open mind and ear to all styles of music, and I focus not only on the drums but also the other instruments. Early influences included Mahler, Beethoven, and other classical music, The Beatles, The Beach Boys, Stevie Wonder, Elton John, Laura Nyro, Led Zeppelin, and Jimi Hendrix, and jazz drummers Max Roach, Tony Williams, Elvin Jones, Airto Moreira, Jack DeJohnette, and Billy Cobham. Later came Steve Gadd.

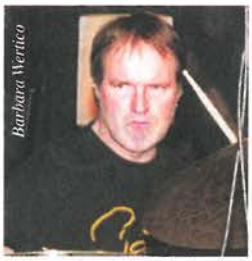
In the generation after that, you, Paul, are my hero. Some of the post-Gadd drummers took drum technique to unlimited heights, displaying chops, variation, and speed beyond belief. However, many of them leave me feeling like they're trying to copy Gadd, only faster and more mechanical. Instead, you play for the moment, always making it enjoyable to listen to on a musical level. I've always admired the sound you get out of the drums, blending in with the rest of the band as part of the overall production. Just as the way my book's material should be used in a musical context, great drumming is always about tasteful choices and discretion.

Paul: Thanks for the compliment, Terry. Are there lesser-known musicians that influenced you?

Terry: Absolutely. It's important to know the history of music. Drum 'n' bass, hip-hop, rap, jazz, and rock drumming are outstanding today. But the underlying foundation comes from stuff that happened in the past. A lot of drummers who are forgotten now were heroes in their day, just like popular bands and players are heroes now. An example is Bob Moses. His drumming on Pat Metheny's debut album, *Bright Sized Life*, is an influential contribution.

Paul: You've been called upon to play in many styles. How do you make those transitions and keep it all together?

Terry: It's important to be sensitive and respectful to the artist you're working with at the moment. I always walk into a session or a live gig with an open mind. I listen and find out what they're looking for, and I complement that as closely as I can in my playing. It's easier to fit in that way, instead of thinking, "Well, I played some heavy fusion stuff on the last session, so even though this is a country date, I'm gonna play a cool jazz fill if it's the last thing I do!" Play for the moment and the occasion, not for your ego. Bring enthusiasm and support to every gig, no matter what it is. You'll always sound good, and you'll help everyone around you sound good too.



Paul Wertico is one of contemporary jazz drumming's leading figures. His thirty-year career has followed some interesting paths, from working with Pat Metheny and Larry Coryell to projects with Kurt Elling, Terry Callier, and Ken Nordine. In the past few years he has recorded several CDs under his own name. His most recent effort, StereoNucleosis, *was reviewed in the August* MD. *(See the* Update *on Paul on page 25.)*

MD Radio

To hear tracks featuring Terry Sliverlight — and Paul Wertico—tune in to MD Radio at www.moderndrummer.com.

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The Art of Self Promotion

Part 1: The Press Release

by Michael Bettine

I'm the president and CEO of my own company. I'm also the office manager, secretary, accountant, trainer, delivery driver, tour manager, and many other things. You see, I'm a company of one. In the music business, not everyone can be a Sting or a Madonna, with a large entourage of people to take care of their personal and business needs. The majority of us are totally responsible for ourselves.

Besides playing our drums onstage—which actually involves a very small percentage of our time—the next most important thing is promotion. Public relations (PR) is just that: relating yourself to the public. Let's face it, if no one knows about you, no one will come to see you play or buy your recordings. So unless you can hire a professional firm to spread your name around, PR becomes a do-it-yourself project.

Let's face it, if no one knows about you, no one will come to see you play or buy your recordings.

My typical day finds the morning occupied with business and promotion activities, and the afternoon set aside for rehearsal. In the morning I read and answer email, put together mailings, and call people who are available at that time. (I deal with people in a lot of different time zones, so I actually make calls at all hours of the day and night.)

The main idea here is to make contact with people. That sounds easy, but modern civilization makes sure we are all flooded with a lot of junk mail, spam, and other things that seek our attention.

In this series, I'd like to go through some of the methods you can use to get your name and your music out for the public's attention. We'll look at promo packs, mailing lists, newsletters, and, in this first article, the press release.

What Is A Press Release?

A press release is a document that announces something, like an upcoming gig, tour, or new recording. You want to keep it short (one page!) and to the point. Readers should not be overwhelmed with facts or have to hunt for the message you are sending. You can include resources, such as your Web site, where they can go to find out more detailed information. Always remember to tell people who, what, when, and where.

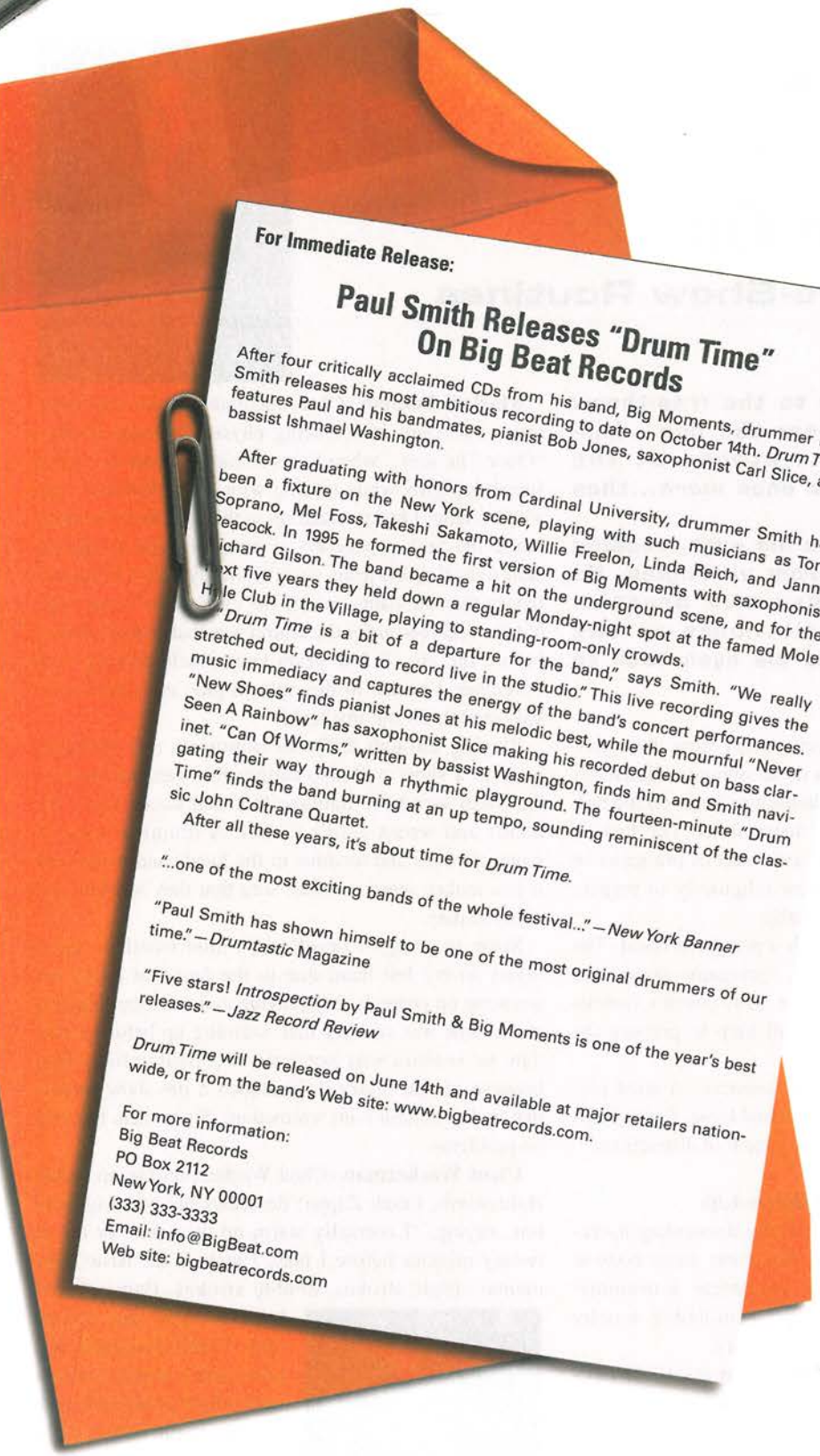
What To Include

Let's look at writing a press release for a new recording. The introductory paragraph should do just that: introduce who you are. Keep it simple, without a lot of self-hype.

In the next paragraph, tell about what you are promoting—in this case your CD. Be sure to say when it's coming out and where it can be obtained. Keep the focus on what you are promoting, without adding unnecessary details.

If you have space, you can use some "pull quotes" to give people further information about you or the band. A pull quote is a statement "pulled" out of a review or article about you. We see these all the time in movie ads: "Best picture of the year! —*Jonesville Gazette*." The use of quotes shows that other people have been paying attention to what you do and responding favorably to it.

The sample press release on the following page gives an illustration of a typical announcement of a new recording. Read it carefully to gain an understanding of the content and the format.



For Immediate Release:

Paul Smith Releases "Drum Time" On Big Beat Records

After four critically acclaimed CDs from his band, Big Moments, drummer Paul Smith releases his most ambitious recording to date on October 14th. *Drum Time* features Paul and his bandmates, pianist Bob Jones, saxophonist Carl Slice, and bassist Ishmael Washington.

After graduating with honors from Cardinal University, drummer Smith has been a fixture on the New York scene, playing with such musicians as Tony Soprano, Mel Foss, Takeshi Sakamoto, Willie Freelon, Linda Reich, and Janna Peacock. In 1995 he formed the first version of Big Moments with saxophonist Richard Gilson. The band became a hit on the underground scene, and for the next five years they held down a regular Monday-night spot at the famed Mole Hole Club in the Village, playing to standing-room-only crowds.

"*Drum Time* is a bit of a departure for the band," says Smith. "We really stretched out, deciding to record live in the studio." This live recording gives the music immediacy and captures the energy of the band's concert performances. "New Shoes" finds pianist Jones at his melodic best, while the mournful "Never Seen A Rainbow" has saxophonist Slice making his recorded debut on bass clarinet. "Can Of Worms," written by bassist Washington, finds him and Smith navigating their way through a rhythmic playground. The fourteen-minute "Drum Time" finds the band burning at an up tempo, sounding reminiscent of the classic John Coltrane Quartet.

After all these years, it's about time for *Drum Time*.

"...one of the most exciting bands of the whole festival..." —*New York Banner*

"Paul Smith has shown himself to be one of the most original drummers of our time." —*Drumtastic* Magazine

"Five stars! *Introspection* by Paul Smith & Big Moments is one of the year's best releases." —*Jazz Record Review*

Drum Time will be released on June 14th and available at major retailers nationwide, or from the band's Web site: www.bigbeatrecords.com.

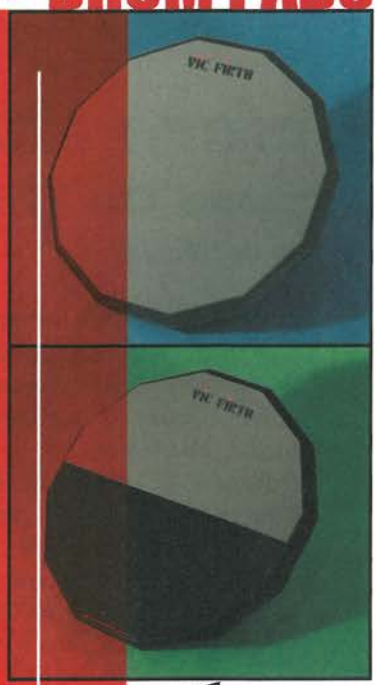
For more information:
Big Beat Records
PO Box 2112
New York, NY 00001
(333) 333-3333
Email: info@BigBeat.com
Web site: bigbeatrecords.com

For Review

Let's recap things. Remember to focus on who, what, when, and where, and always include your contact information so people can find out more. And don't forget to have someone proofread and spell-check anything you've written. This can't be overemphasized. A poorly prepared release undermines the whole purpose of creating a positive image for you and your project.

Your press release is now ready to be sent out to clubs, record companies, industry people, and fans on your mailing list. When you receive inquiries from some of those people, it will be time to send out a promo pack. That's our subject for next month.

>DRUM PADS



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Before You Go On

Artists On Their Pre-Show Routines

by Tom Van Schaik

Scene 1: Jason Kidd steps to the free-throw line. He places his feet near the line...dribbles the ball three times...stares at the rim...blows it a kiss...dribbles once more...then sinks the shot.

Scene 2: Tiger Woods circles his putt, reading the intricacies of the green from all angles. He sets up near the ball...takes two practice strokes...steps up to the ball...looks up two more times at his line...moves his eyes back to the ball...and sinks the putt.

You'll see these two scenarios every time these professional sports figures are in these situations. Each has his own pre-shot routine that helps him focus on the task at hand and drive away any distractions. The fact is, almost all sports figures have some sort of pre-game or pre-shot routine that they follow religiously to prepare themselves mentally and physically.

Even entire teams go through a pre-game ritual. The NBA "shoot around," the NHL "pre-game skate," the MLB "batting practice," and the NFL coach's famous pre-game locker-room speech all help to prepare the team for the game.

For performing artists—like drummers—a good pre-show routine gets the body relaxed and loose. It also helps to focus the mind on the show and free it of distractions.

Physical Warm-Up

The drums are the most physically demanding instrument to play. A drummer uses his or her entire body to play the instrument. Just like an athlete, a drummer must stretch the muscles and have them limber in order to play at his or her best and avoid injury.

Author/educator **Chuck Silverman** states, "I definitely stretch before each gig, practice session, or other performance situation. I stretch out my forearms, wrists, shoulders, quadriceps [large muscles in the front of the legs], hamstrings, biceps, and calves."

Of course, the major areas on which to focus are the hands and wrists, since they usually take the brunt of the punishment. To validate this point, consider the many recent *MD* articles about stretches for different parts of the body. If the body is not warmed up, the resulting muscle cramps and pulls can create a major hindrance to the performance.

Mark Schulman (Cher) recounts a story that illustrates the result of not being physically ready to play. "Once," he says, "when I was soloing in front of 12,000 screaming girls while touring with Richard Marx, I got a calf cramp. I had to stand up in the middle of the show while my tech proceeded to jump onstage to cut my skin-tight English jeans away from my body! It's a nice theory that the pants cut off the circulation to my legs, but the real reason for the cramp was that I didn't stretch before the gig. A few years later, while playing with Foreigner, I turned to the right to play my China cymbal—and threw out my back."

Playing through different rudiments and exercises prior to a show will also further the warm-up process and help avoid the damage that can occur when the hands and wrists aren't limber. A drummer uses so many muscles and tendons in the hands and wrists that it just makes sense to make sure that they're loose and ready to play.

Some years ago I developed a mild repetitive stress injury to my left hand due to the fact that I was not warming up properly. My playing and teaching schedule at the time was so busy that warming up before a club date or session was not even a consideration. But, because of that injury, I developed a pre-show routine that makes certain I am warmed up. Since then, I've had no problems.

Chad Wackerman (Chad Wackerman Group, Allan Holdsworth, Frank Zappa) describes his warm-up routine, saying, "I normally warm up on a pad for ten to twenty minutes before I play. I include the basic rudiments: single strokes, double strokes, flams played hand-to-hand, and closed rolls. Then I incorporate my feet, using single strokes with a foot in between each single: right hand, right foot, left hand, left foot. Sometimes I'll try to play rhythms with my hands, and then repeat them with my feet. Beyond this, I'll play anything to get myself in a mode where I feel warmed up, relaxed, and in control. If I don't do a routine like this, I don't feel comfortable on the kit until the second tune! I try to be aware of

my breathing, too, because if I'm relaxed then the music is going to feel good."

Most of us are not lucky enough to be in a situation where we have a practice kit backstage. So a practice pad, a chair, a telephone book, or even a stack of towels backstage can provide the means to warm up. Many times a physical pre-show routine will also generate a state of mental focus and relaxation.

Mental Warm-Up

A mental warm-up is just as important as a physical one. It helps to rid your mind of any distractions you have in your life—like bad travel, trouble at home or on the job, illness, or a fight with bandmembers—and focus on the upcoming event.

Athletes regularly use visualization to focus their minds and bodies before competition. Studies have shown that when an athlete is visualizing an event, the brain actually sends impulses to the muscles required for the task. When asked what he thinks about before a jump, world-class high jumper Dwight Stone said he visualizes the perfect jump, from the first step, to the takeoff, to the landing. In doing so, his mind prepares his body to execute a successful jump.

Many artists practice some sort of meditation prior to playing. You don't need incense, candles, and a dozen droning Tibetan monks to do this. Just find a quiet place, relax, and see yourself playing your best. Other artists use books, music, or prayer to aid them in relaxing and focusing their minds.

Doane Perry (Jethro Tull) reveals, "The most important thing for me is taking some time to mentally prepare myself for that evening's performance. This can take several different forms. Reading is a great pastime of mine, and it's a wonderful source of relaxation. I've practiced meditation and yoga for many years, and although I don't practice them every day on the road, I find them to be very useful tools to help me clear away the mental clutter and stress of the day. I always try to find a few moments before a performance to be silent and by myself to mentally focus on what I'm about to do. I visualize my instrument and how I'd like to be playing."

Music can also be used to get the adrenaline flowing before a show. Even the pre-show music that the audience hears is designed to bring them to a certain emotional level before the artist hits the stage. Select a set of songs that gets you excited and inspired, and create a personal pre-show collection on a burned CD or MP3 player.

Josh Freese (A Perfect Circle) says of his selection, "Listening to music is a good way for me to chill out and think about the night's performance. I don't know how much you can really 'meditate' to The Ramones, but you get the picture. Whatever is inspiring and puts me in a good headspace is fine. Lately it's been a lot of Pantera and Steely Dan."

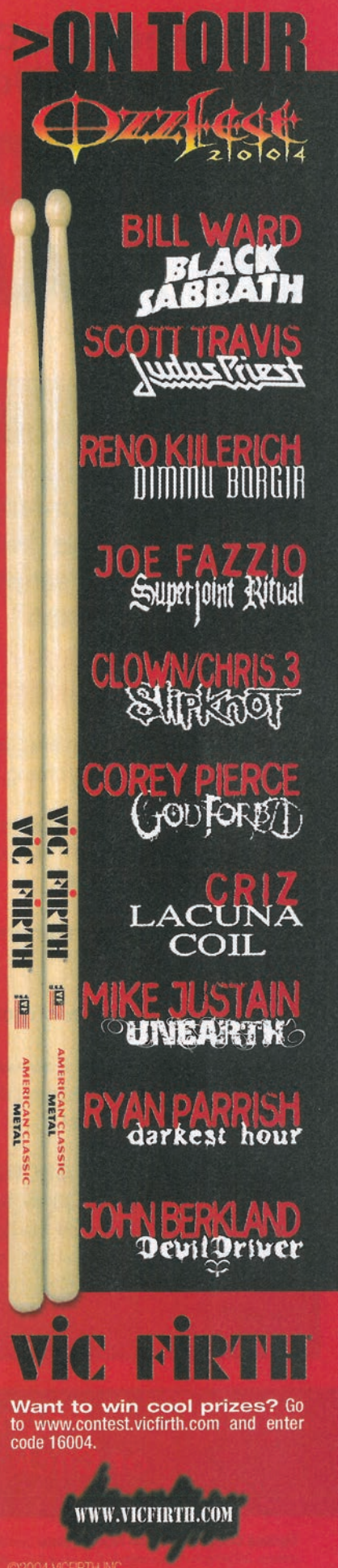
Personal Routines

I asked several artists I know to describe their personal pre-show routines. None of them had anything very unusual that they do before a show. No animal sacrifices, voodoo dolls, burning incense...nothing weird. Just good, solid physical and mental preparation.

I'd like to start things off with my own routine. I avoid eating at least two hours before the show. If I eat just before I go on stage, I tend to feel sluggish. About one hour prior to the show, I change into my "stage clothes." This is like putting on a sports uniform and helps to get my "game face" on. If I feel a little tired, I'll have an energy drink. Then I begin warming up on a pad, going through rudiments and exercises that I've collected over the years. About fifteen minutes before the show, I go on stage to double-check my gear and make sure everything is ready for the show. After everything is checked out, I grab a pair of sticks and go backstage and find a quiet spot to gather my thoughts. I tend to pace and play some "air drums," which helps keep my arms and wrists loose—all the while visualizing myself playing the show with smooth, relaxed, fluid motions. Then it's time to hit the stage—and I'm ready.

So much for my own routine. Here now are comments from a wide variety of drum and percussion performers.

Mark Schulman: "I stretch, stretch, and stretch! No sticks grace my hands before the show. It's just my body and me. I stretch my legs, back, forearms, and neck. And I use this time to create a bit of a med-



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Pre-Show Routines

itative state to preface all the wonderful energy exchange to come."

Brad Hargreaves (Third Eye Blind): "I never used to have a routine before performing. But due to a ligament injury in my wrist, I no longer have a choice. Once, we played a show in Pennsylvania that Fuel drummer Kevin Miller attended. We got to talking about wrist problems, and he gave me a great tip. Rather than doing stick exercises to warm up my wrist, he told me to use heat packs. Now I put a heat pack on my wrist fifteen to twenty minutes before a show to raise the temperature of my wrists and loosen the ligaments."

Dom Famularo (author/clinician): "When I travel, my schedule is so jammed that I get very little time to warm up. So most of my warm-up time before a performance is just mental preparation. I stay positive, keep the humor strong, and keep to the task of setting up. During my set-up time, I play to get familiar with my kit, since I use a different kit at each event. This helps me warm up a bit."

Jeff Hale (independent): "I don't have a specific routine, but I do follow certain habits before a show. On the day of the show, I usually play golf or walk a few miles to work out the 'bus kinks' and clear my mind. I eat very lightly—soup or salad—about two to three hours before a performance. I warm up by doing rudiments on a pad for about forty minutes. Once I'm at the gig, I like to go backstage to check out the vibe of the venue. And right before the show, I always put a fresh piece of gum in my mouth and grab two new pairs of sticks—one set in my back pocket and one in my hands."

Josh Freese: "The older I get, the more I find myself preparing for a show. It's only been in the past few years—after pulling a few muscles and growing up a little—that I've been forced to take a few precautions. I try not to eat within a few hours of showtime. And though I still don't do any stick exercises, I try to do some basic stretches and just shake my arms out a little bit. Oh yeah...no fistfights with any of the other bandmembers prior to going on stage, either."

Marco Minnemann (Illegal Aliens, clinician): "I try to practice in the afternoon before soundcheck, so I can save my full energy for the show. About ten minutes before the show I start loosening up a little by doing some rudimental stuff, but that's about it. What is very important to me is a quiet atmosphere around thirty minutes before the performance starts, so that I can mentally run through the show."

Steve Ferrone (Tom Petty, Eric Clapton): "I like to eat, take a nap, then wake up and take a hot shower half an hour before walking on stage. Then I usually pray to be of maximum service to my band and the audience. I find that this process enables me to demonstrate the wonderful gift I've been given."

Steve Fisher (percussion product manager, Roland Corporation): "I learned this trick while playing percussion on Maynard Ferguson's band. We'd play outdoor jazz festivals, and the weather was sometimes cold. I would either soak or run my hands under warm water for a minute or two. It got the blood flowing to my fingers and loosened up my joints. This made the rest of my warm-up that much more productive."

Steve Moretti (Toni Tennille, Lorna Luft): "I usually have a good meal about an hour before I get ready to warm up. Then I do some stretching and deep-breathing exercises. I warm up my hands by running through some rudiments, starting with slow, open rolls, and increasing the tempo only when I feel relaxed. I then move on to other pattern-type exercises I've worked out."

Tommy Wells (Nashville studio, independent): "My pre-show drum warm-up is the same for drums as it was for hockey: about five minutes of stretching, a minute of visualization, and then let's rock!"

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Pre-Show Routines

Nick D'Virgilio (Spock's Beard): "Now that I'm the lead singer of the band, I have to make time to do vocal exercises before a show. Then I warm up on a practice pad for twenty to thirty minutes, just doing rudiments and things like that. I usually tap my feet along and get them warm as well. After that, I stretch if I have the time. I feel that stretching is more important than warming up on the pad, because it really gets my whole body prepared for the gig. I try to eat at least a couple of hours before I play. And right before we go on, the whole band does a big cheer. I love that!"

Billy Ashbaugh (Pat Benatar, *NSYNC): "Right before every show, I like to get away somewhere to sit in private and warm up on my practice pad. This serves a dual purpose. Not only do I get my hands warmed up and get the blood flowing, but I also get a chance to get my 'game face' on. For me, mental preparation is very important. Rarely do I just jump on stage and start playing. Even if it's only for a brief moment, I'll think about the show and any trouble spots there might be.

"Also, two summers ago I started jumping rope about an hour before every show. This helps tremendously with my energy level during the show. No matter how tired I might be, after a good jump I always feel 100% better."

Billy English (Willie Nelson): "For a typical 8:00 P.M. show, I like to have dinner around 5:30. I try to eat healthy things in average portions. Then I head to the tour bus and get horizontal in my bunk. Sometimes I'll have a short nap, or just try to clear my mind and relax before the show. I'll get up between 7:00 and 7:15, feeling refreshed and ready for the show."

Paul English (Willie Nelson): "After thirty-eight years with Willie, I must say that there is nothing routine before the show. I usually just hang out in the bus,

Thomas Lang (US and UK studio, clinician): "After soundcheck, you might find me practicing on a portable practice kit. That way I feel like I've accomplished something while everyone else is hanging out at the hotel. That feeling of accomplishment helps me to relax and focus—especially when I'm doing work that requires a lot of concentration and musical discipline. I always make sure that either my tech or I double-check my setup to make sure my gear is in place and functioning.

"I don't warm up right before a show because I think it spoils the anticipation of the show. Not to mention that the sound of tapping drumsticks makes me and everybody around me nervous. In fact, I consider the benefits of a quick warm-up to be almost negligible. I'd much rather have some peace and distance from the drums immediately before the show, or chat with my friends in the band and crew, or have a small snack from catering. I always need at least an hour or more without sticks in my hands just before showtime. I also hate being onstage and feeling the 'call of nature.' So that's usually the last thing I take care of before going on."

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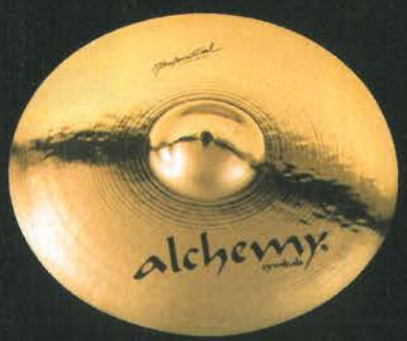

good & bad

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Gregg Bissonette (independent, Ringo Starr): "I never feel as though I can play my best unless I warm-up for at least twenty minutes before a gig or a recording session. My warm-up is very simple. First I do some basic stretching—nothing too intense—and then I play a pattern that I learned from my North Texas State drumline instructor, G.G. Gonzales. The pattern alternates between single and double strokes over two bars.

"Play four 16th-note singles (RLRL), then eight 32nd-note doubles (RRLL, RRLL), and then repeat that. Then play eight 16th-note singles (RLRL, RLRL) followed by sixteen 32nd-note doubles (RRLL, RRLL, RRLL, RRLL). Then repeat it all from the top. Start at a slow tempo and gradually increase the speed to the max. Hold it there for a bit, then slowly come back down to the starting tempo. I do all of this over 16th-note singles played with my feet.

"Some people don't like to play on a full stomach. But I can't stand to do *anything* when I'm really hungry. So I usually eat a meal before the gig or session, as opposed to afterward."

make business calls, or review the contract for the show. Sometimes Willie will want to play chess until right before showtime."

Doane Perry (Jethro Tull): "I try not to eat less than four to five hours before a concert. If I break that rule, then I try to restrict it to a bowl of soup or a light salad. Drinking plenty of water keeps me hydrated, which helps to avoid muscle cramps during the show. In addition to the usual rudimental warm-up exercises that I do with my hands and feet, I do a lot of stretching—especially my hands, arms, and upper body. This is something I find to be just as important as the warm-up exercises. At some point during this routine I'll play along with a metronome and/or some music that inspires me. I often listen to the previous night's show and review aspects of my performance, so I can see what is and isn't working, and what happy accidents are worth remembering."

The Wrap-Up

Like I said, none of the artists I spoke with really had anything very unusual that they do before a show. Well, except for Thomas Lang, who did add the following.

"I guess I do have one small 'ritual' that I perform before showtime. Before I go on, I always shave twice with my left hand while standing barefoot on a copy of *The Hardy Boys Volume #5, The Mystery Of The Spiral Bridge*, keeping my right hand submerged in a bowl of lukewarm Knorr vegetable bouillon and listening to the soundtrack from the 1968 film classic *Planet Of The Apes*. But everybody does *that*, right?"

Sure, Thomas.

Tom Van Schaik is the touring/recording drummer for Koch/Audium artist Robert Earl Keen. He has also performed and recorded with The Dixie Chicks, among others.

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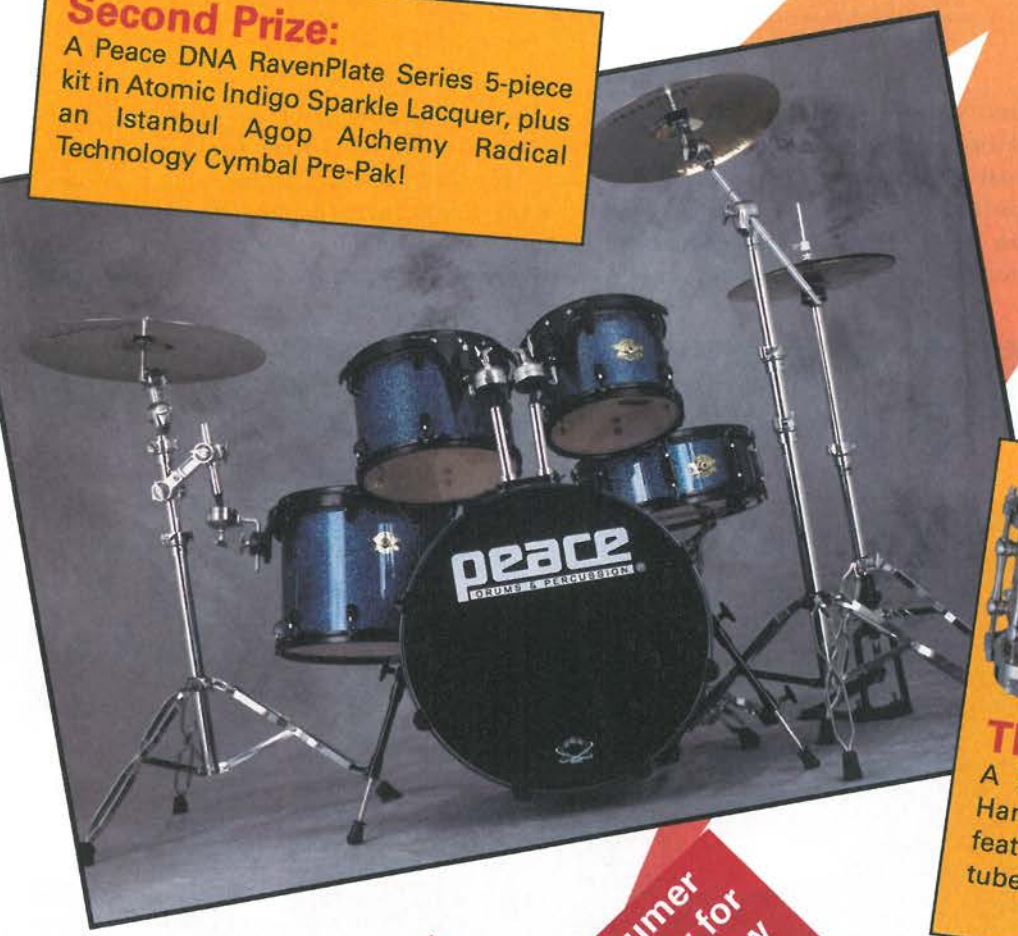

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MODERN DRUMMER

My (New And Improved) Left Foot

by Josh Freese

Editor's note: Josh Freese, drummer extraordinaire with A Perfect Circle, The Vandals, and a bazillion sessions (this guy is everywhere!), recently had a mishap while on tour. Here's the lowdown on what happened, in the mighty one's own words.

The time spent between soundcheck and the show is something I look forward to every day. It usually consists of listening to music, having dinner, and relaxing before diving into another show, another bus ride, and another late night. But on March 21 of this year it was a different scene backstage in Albuquerque.

Lissa Wales

Forty-eight hours earlier we had embarked on our biggest, most successful tour to date. Were we going home tomorrow morning after just two shows?

Lissa Wales

It started out normally enough. Everything was going routinely, and after soundcheck I headed off to grab some food. The catering area was set up in the corner of a room about the size of a high school gymnasium. I noticed Jon Theodore (drummer extraordinaire for support act The Mars Volta) on the other side of this huge room, fooling with a small remote-control plane that was pretty low-tech looking. It was held together with rubber bands and scotch tape, and it was puttering around so slow that if it hit anyone it wouldn't hurt them. Besides, it usually would only stay up in the air for about five seconds.

Well, I decided to run across the room towards the plane and play a game of good ol' fashioned "chicken" with it. At the last second, I ducked, my right leg gave out, and I took a very awkward fall. My right kneecap slammed into the cement with all my weight on top of it. I stood up and tried to walk it off, but after a few minutes decided that I should probably stop being a tough guy, lie down, and throw some ice on it.

Reality Rears Its Ugly Head

As I lay in the dressing room with a big bag of ice on my knee, I realized two things:

1. This was a little more serious than I originally thought it was. I mean, ten minutes after the fall I could barely move my leg.

2. This was my right knee! You know, the one I use to play the kick drum with every night. This had the potential to be a *huge* disaster. Not only did we have a show in three hours, but just forty-eight hours earlier we had embarked on our biggest, most successful tour to date. It was a solid three-month tour…and we had just started! Were we going home tomorrow morning after just two shows?

As they hauled me off to the local emergency room to get X-rayed, a slight panic set in with me, my band, and our thirty-one-person crew. Looking back I can honestly say that I was surprised at how relaxed I was about the whole thing. Right away I thought, "Well, I'll just have to play the kick with my left foot on my double pedal, and have two hi-hats next to each other—one closed and one half open." Easy, right? Well, at least do-able.

The Show Must Go On

They told me at the hospital that I had fractured my kneecap and would have to stay off it for six to eight weeks. "Great," I thought. "That's almost the whole tour! I'm basically going to have to go out fighting with one arm tied behind my back every night." Not an ideal situation, but what was I going to do about it? I told myself that I could pull it off, trying to keep a positive attitude about the whole thing. I returned to the venue with a leg brace, crutches, ice packs, and pain pills. In only a few minutes it was time to hobble up on the stage and sit behind my drums to see how this whole thing was going to work.

That first show was a little rough…physically and mentally. I made weird mistakes in places where I normally never would have. I

Lissa Wales

had to re-approach and simplify a lot of patterns and fills. I've explained it to non-drummers like this: "It's like if you were driving your car and had to brake *and* accelerate with your left foot. It can be done, although it would be bumpy and a little herky-jerky. But you'd still be able to get to your destination."

It's All In The Arrangement

On day two, my drum tech (the lovely and talented Joe Paul Slaby) and I configured a setup that was a little more functional. We moved the kick drum over to the left (like a double bass setup with the main kick removed) so I could keep my right leg extended out in front of me. Instead of using two bulky hi-hat stands crammed together, we got X-hats that branched off a stand—again, one locked down tight and the other one half open.

As the tour marched on it got a little bit easier to play each night, especially as I built up some stamina. It started to get easier mentally as well. Aside from the kick stuff, going between the two hi-hats for certain patterns also proved to be a workout on the ol' brain. The weird thing is, after a couple of weeks this all started to become normal, and I would trip out thinking about going back to the "regular way." Don't get me wrong...I haven't mastered this thing by any means. I feel club-footed sometimes. My left foot doesn't have nearly as much finesse or speed as my right foot does. But it's working out alright.

On The Road Again

As I write this I'm still on tour and still playing left-footed every night. I just went off the crutches a few days ago, and I'm starting physical therapy soon. I have a second small kit that is set up backstage most days so that I can practice a little (slowly and lightly) to get my right leg happening again. In a weird way it's been a fun challenge that has made me a better drummer. Maybe I'll finally be decent at double bass now!

Last but not least, I have to mention how great Joe Slaby and everyone on A Perfect Circle's crew has been with helping me out and being accommodating and cool. As far as I'm concerned, I lucked out. It could have been much worse.

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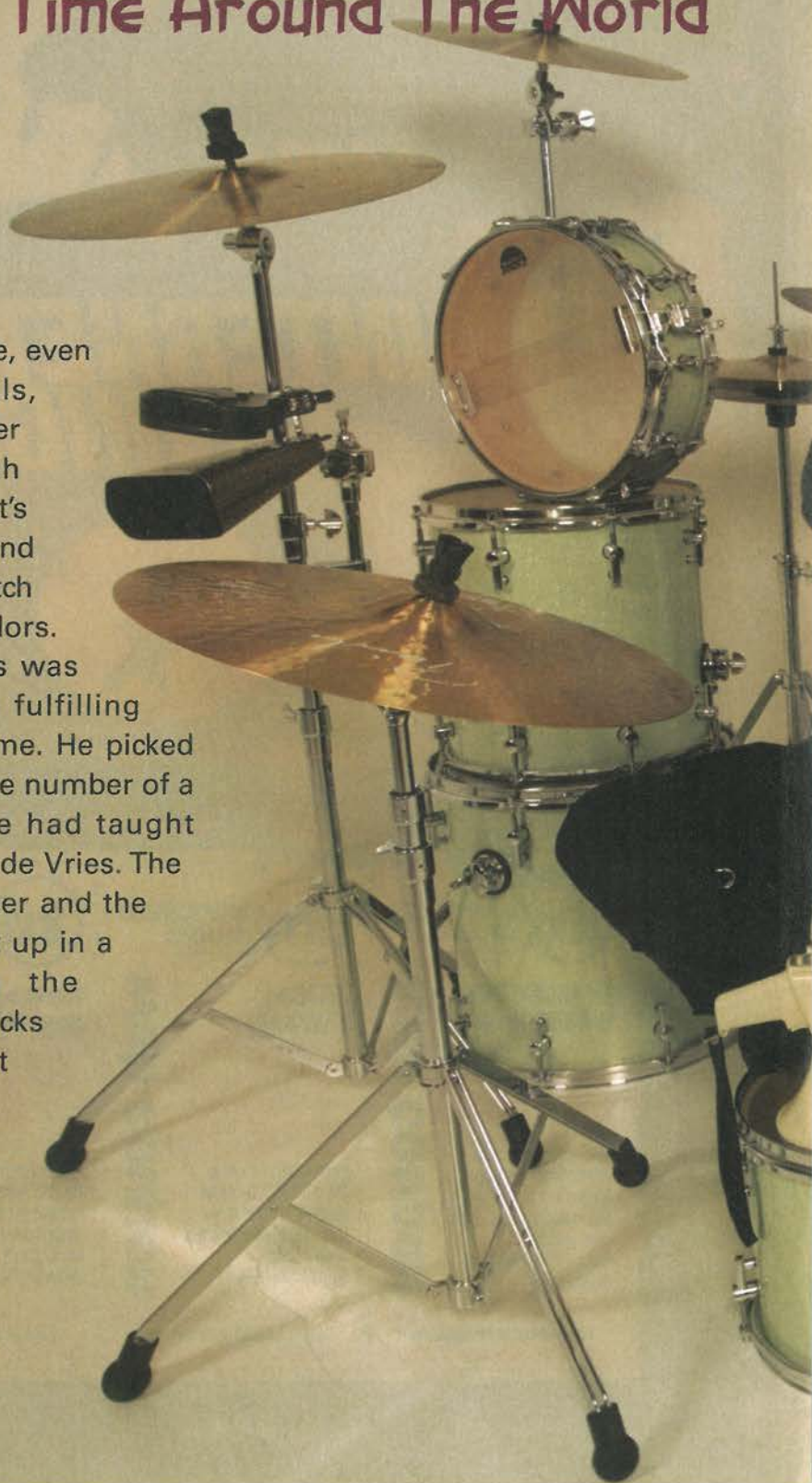
The Drum

René Creemers & Wim de Vries
Having A Good Time Around The World

by T. Bruce Wittet



It could happen anywhere, even in the land of windmills, tulips, and dikes: A drummer could get frustrated with bashing his brains out. That's pretty much the story behind the birth of the unique Dutch drum duo The Drumbassadors.

Founder René Creemers was seeking something more fulfilling than playing full tilt full time. He picked up the phone and dialed the number of a hot young bop player he had taught twelve years before, Wim de Vries. The veteran pop/fusion drummer and the up & coming jazz buff met up in a rehearsal room. From the moment they dropped sticks there were no flams—not unless they planned it that way!

bassadors

Let's make a couple of things clear. The Drumbassadors is no novelty act, cobbled together for corporate functions. Nor is it the result of two underemployed drummers seeking to better their chances. Rather, it's a union of two busy drummers at the height of their respective careers. They have created a musical entity that stakes its growing reputation on flawless execution, precise ensemble work, inspired compositions, and frightening intuition.

At the end of the day, The Drumbassadors prove that it's entirely possible to perform drumming at the highest level *and* make music. And that premise is beginning to appeal to drummers far beyond the flat fields and canals of Holland. It certainly caused a commotion at the 2003 Modern Drummer Festival Weekend, now available on a Hudson Music DVD. When it came time for their spot in the program, The Drumbassadors brought it down to a hush. *Force them to listen*. It's a tenet as old as showbiz. Then they stepped up the energy, with René ably guarding the groove while Wim (pronounced "Vim") got frisky, flicking and twirling the sticks without missing a beat or nuance. When they chanted their credo in a charming Dutch accent: "Drumbassadors having a good time," it was no idle chatter. Aside from being an enormous creative outlet for Creemers and de Vries, this is the most fun either has had in years—and it's been going on now since 1999.

René Creemers' Discontent

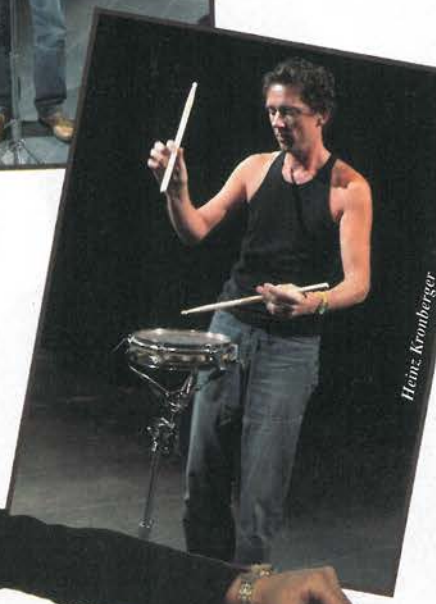
The founder and "senior partner" in The Drumbassadors, Creemers, at age forty-five, has accumulated a solid reputation in his homeland and abroad, based on twenty years of clinics in Western Europe and extensive touring with popular bands.

"I was about six when I started drumming," René recalls. "My brother was a drummer, so we had a kit at home. Then I went to a local music school and we had a teacher who made me want to study drums. So I went to the conservatory, where I graduated from in 1982. My first important band was Blowbeat. We were pretty famous in the club circuit and did about five hundred gigs. I did that until 1991, when I became a solo Paiste clinician.

"From 1990 to 1998," René continues, "I did a lot of different projects, like records for various singers and bands. Then I met Rich Wyman, an American piano player who had won the ASCAP prize for singer/songwriters. He did solo concerts in Holland. I was the drummer on his record, and we formed a band and did concerts. That stopped because Rich was a real rock-oriented player, and after a while I didn't like it."

René's increasing unhappiness turned on an age-old drummers' problem. The drummer explains, "As you know, guitar players like their Marshall amps set at eleven. Eventually at gigs I could only

René Creemers



hear my snare drum and crash cymbals. Sure, I could have used a monitor, but I didn't want to explode the stage volume levels. I'm a very acoustic-oriented drummer. If I play in a room with lots of glass, I have to play differently than in a room with wood. It sounds different. When a band makes such an incredible noise, it's not fun for me anymore. In that setting I can only hit one way: loud and hard. That's why I like play-

Wim de Vries

ing with Wim. We both want to play in a natural, acoustic manner that respects the acoustics of where we're performing. The two of us are drummers playing drum music and, man, I've found what I want!"

Although he's built a career around bands, René finds that he's lost nothing by shrinking down to a duo. Certainly he hasn't severed ties with traditional notions of melody and harmony.

"We *do* play melody," René asserts. "It may not be melody in the sense of a piano, but we play in a melodic way. When we do a ninety-minute concert, there's much more melody than we were able to play at the Modern Drummer Festival. If you've seen that video, you've only seen part of what we do."

René outlines the division of labor: "Wim is a creative, powerful, and fast player. I'm a little more relaxed and into groove playing. When I see him twirling sticks, for example, I want to study it myself, but in general I'll focus on the groove. It's great that we're different, because *nobody* would want to come and see two identical drummers. We play the same drumsets and the same repertoire, so we need to have different styles. But we're not *too* far from each other. Wim makes me study jazz, and I make him study groove."

During the initial stage of their relationship, it wasn't always smooth sailing. "It didn't work perfectly during the first two months," René recalls. "But after a while it became easier. We relaxed, and we noticed that when you play relaxed, the other person can be more creative. I learned to listen with his ears and he learned to listen with mine."

Gradually the two developed a book of eleven pieces. Nine of these they play together, and two are solo vehicles. The repertoire encompasses a full range of dynamics and tempos. "If we're in a festival situation," René continues, "and following someone who's playing really fast and loud, we can adjust and play something more quiet and slow. We know this material so well that we can change things at a moment's notice."

It's one thing to be prepared. It's another to saunter into an audience of drummers like at the MD Festival and not betray any sense of nervousness. "*Of course* I was nervous," René admits. "Twenty years ago, when I did the drummers' meeting in

Koblenz, I was unbelievably nervous. For weeks before, I was thinking, What should I do, what should I play? And I realized that I should just play the way I play at home. Just do your thing and don't try to be someone else. That's what I teach my students. When you're nervous and play for a big audience, you tend to want to start at the climax, playing the best licks you have so that the audience goes 'Wow.' When you're under tension, certain licks won't work as well. Don't think in the negative and dwell on it. Let it go. What's gone has gone."

When he refers to his students, René's not talking a mere handful. In fact, he maintains a busy schedule teaching at high school and conservatory levels. Speaking of the latter, his students must graduate with facility in all styles. "I had to develop a curriculum myself," René says, "because I began teaching rock/fusion and there wasn't such a thing available. My curriculum has to do with timekeeping and coordination, and we use books I've written. I also use a music-minus-one approach. My students will write charts from Zappa or Steely Dan tunes and then play them. I just want to hear the music come out and not talk about technique, which is the other part of the program where they learn technical stuff—coordination, movement, and stickings."

> "We play about sixty times a year. So we're pretty relaxed now—no stress about what's to come!"
> Wim de Vries

When it comes to his own technique, René espouses traditional left-hand grip, something that goes back to his childhood days in marching band. He has no problem with achieving volume or smacking rimshots with the traditional left hand. "Vinnie [Colaiuta] can play loud with traditional," René notes.

A loyal Paiste and Sonor endorser, René admits, "Sometimes I get phone calls from other companies, but I feel a part of the family with Paiste and Sonor. When I wasn't comfortable with ride cymbals, they made prototypes. Both companies do their best to satisfy us." Paiste has also released an excellent DVD of the duo, *Drumbassadors Volume 1*. It's available at www.paiste.com.

Vim & Vigor: Wim de Vries

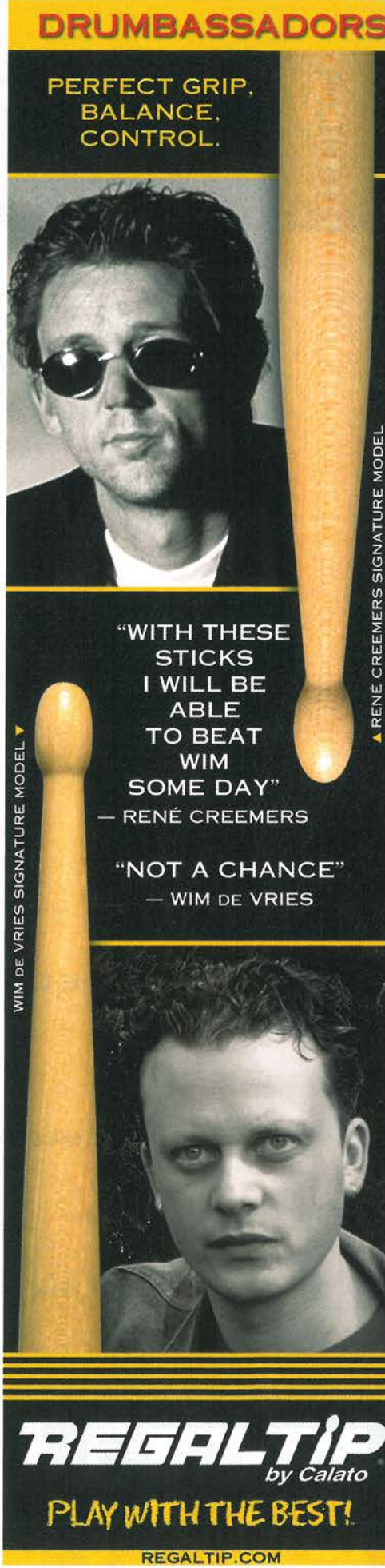
What prompts a veteran to approach a young gun? Exactly what did René appreciate about Wim de Vries' playing? "My playing was totally different from René's—at least when we started," Wim responds. "I was more of a jazz drummer and René was more of a pop drummer. Now after four years we've grown closer to each other in styles. We 'teach' each other on stage and when we're rehearsing together.

"René has a way of groove playing," Wim continues, "where he tries to get a better sound—not from playing lots of notes. It wasn't my type of drumming. I was playing jazz on a small drumkit. I listened to all the old favorites: Tony Williams and Buddy Rich, of course."

As an adolescent, Wim played in a marching band, where he learned traditional grip. Later he learned snare drum technique and mallets from Dutch instructor Joop Von Erven. He also studied under René Creemers, then departed for Boston.

"I went to Berklee for half a year," Wim recalls. "At Berklee, it was very nice to take lessons with Joe Hunt, because we would play tunes together. We didn't need to do technical things, because I had good lessons here in Holland. For me, learning technique and playing the drums was not difficult; making *music* on them is difficult."

Today Wim has a few jazz groups on the go, in addition to steady gigs playing Broadway-style musicals. He works the length of Holland as well as Germany and other adjacent countries. A small-group fanatic, he says that if he could assemble a dream band, he'd include Christian McBride



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on bass and Benny Green on piano. "And that's *it*," says Wim. "I love the sound of piano trios."

One reason Wim loves trios is that you can hear the overtones from cymbals more clearly. Notable in a Drumbassadors performance is a clean, dry cymbal sound—particularly the rides. "That's a ride that Paiste made for us," Wim explains. "They made three for René and three for me, and the one we used at the MD Festival was similar. It has a little bit of crash in it, and I put a rivet in mine. It's a 21" that is a little higher-pitched than their Traditionals line—but not *too* high. When I'm playing with René, it's not a big issue which cymbals I play. All the Paiste crashes and rides are good. But when I'm playing in a piano trio it's more exacting."

> "I would suggest that every drummer find another drummer to play with."
> René Creemers

You'd think that in a duet each drummer would strive for a different-sounding drum and cymbal setup. Surprisingly, Wim and René adopt virtually the same tuning, drum sizes, and timbres. "We play melodies on toms, so we both tune to E flat major," Wim explains. "But when you put a stick in your hand, you get another tone from what the drum is tuned to. Just because the drums are *tuned* the same doesn't mean they will *sound* identical."

Whereas at the MD Festival Wim and René were using mismatched batters, these days both prefer Remo Renaissance heads, with the exception of the snare drum, which gets an Ambassador for reasons of increased volume.

Sonor drums are a big part of The Drumbassadors' sound. "The Sonor Delite is the best drum they've ever made," Wim says. "It's not too heavy to lift, and you can use it in any style. For jazz, I have a small set with a shallow 14x18 bass drum, a 12" rack tom that's not deep, and a shallow 14" floor tom as well. You can't buy that floor tom size, but they made one for me. I'm the lucky one! In the musical I'm playing, it's also a Delite kit, but with a 17x20 bass drum.

The Fun Factor

The word "fun" comes up frequently in a Drumbassadors performance. "We play about sixty times a year," Wim explains, "and we know what we're doing. We're pretty relaxed now—no stress about what's to come! When René is soloing, I know what he's going to do. It *is* fun."

The fun is a result of ample preparation. Although both drummers are good readers, they rarely carry charts. Says Wim, "We've never written out much of our material, except for our snare drum piece. And one of the themes comes from a book René wrote with another drummer. But when we create a new tune in the rehearsal room, we practice the theme and the soloing. When there's something to study, we take it home. We don't do it together."

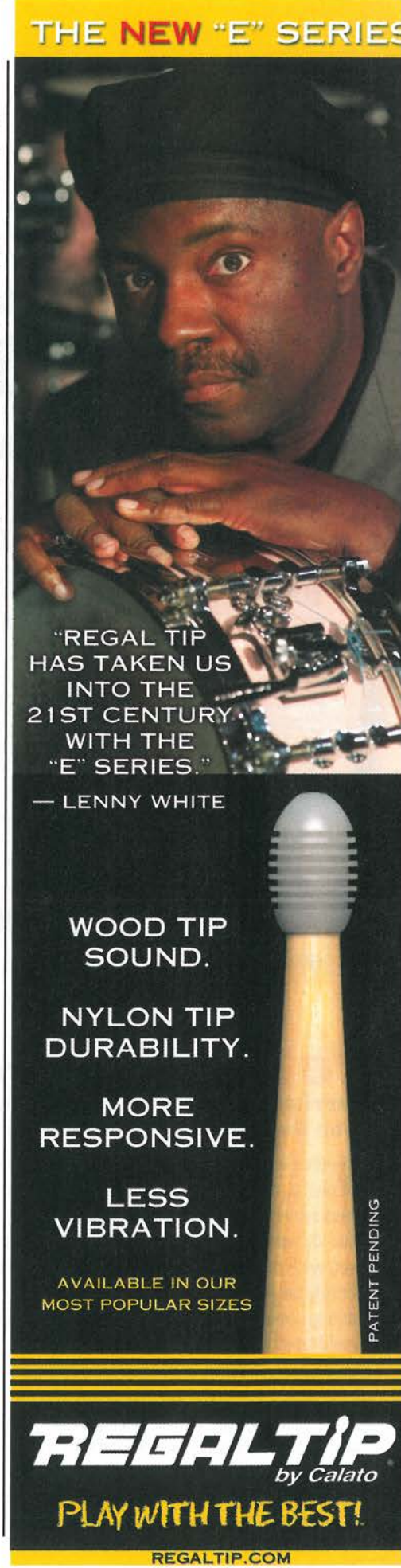
Many American drummers complain about a bleak work situation. "For me, it's very good," Wim says. "I'm playing in Holland and Germany. What I like about living here is the small distances I have to travel. It means that I can go home after a gig. I have a family with two children. I'm away from home maybe three days a month. You can do the gigs for twenty dollars a night here, too, but I don't like to do that. Not all of my gigs are great gigs. I have to play a lot of commercial ones to make a living, even though I prefer jazz."

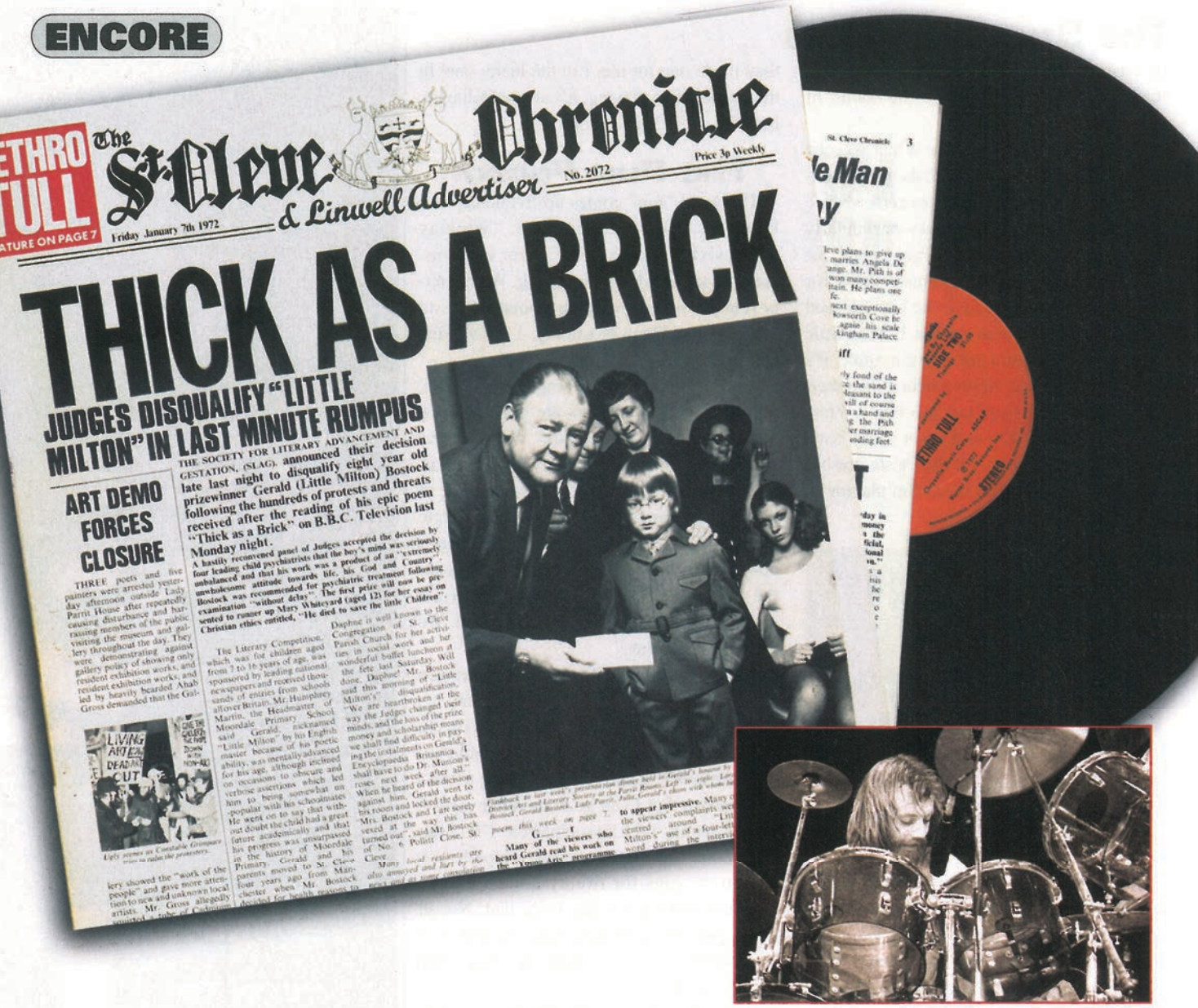
Come November, The Drumbassadors will venture once more across the waters to appear at the Montreal Drum Fest. "We didn't expect that this would be so successful," Wim admits. "It's become *half* of our income. We play concerts that aren't strictly for drummers. For instance, this week we're playing a school concert for children where we'll talk to them and try to motivate them to play drums."

René gets the parting word: "We have an ideal situation. I would suggest that every drummer find another drummer to play with."

For more on René and Wim, visit www.drumbassadors.com.

MD Radio To hear Drumbassadors tracks, go to MD Radio at www.moderndrummer.com.





Jethro Tull Thick As A Brick

Barriemore Barlow (dr), Ian Anderson (fl, gtr, vcl), Jeffrey Hammond (bs), John Evan (kybd), Martin Barre (gtr)

MD Radio

Jethro Tull's groundbreaking *Aqualung* had been widely considered one of rock's original "concept" albums. But in fact bandleader Ian Anderson always insisted it was merely a collection of songs. With typically sly humor, rock's most literate flautist decided, They want high concept, we'll *give* 'em high concept! Tull then proceeded to devise the most densely packed collection of musical ideas the already ambitious band had ever come up with. "The mother of all concept albums," as Anderson would later describe *Thick As A Brick*, comprises one tumbling cut strewn over two album sides. Critics howled "Pretentious!" Audiences scratched their heads. And nearly everyone missed the joke.

Still, the growing legions of progressive-rock fans in 1972 found the music intriguing enough to make the record a big hit. Listening to it today, musicians are inevitably blown away by the wit, imagination, and pure rock found between the grooves. Drummers in particular gawk at Barriemore Barlow's gargantuan performance. (Keep in mind, the band used to perform the *entire* forty-minute piece in concert.) With flawless chops, odd but accurate choices, and a flair for the dramatic, Barrie sealed his place in prog rock lore with his debut Tull performance. Among the highlights: liquid press rolls, completely unexpected approaches to odd times, and a "devolving" drum solo (track 2, 1:32) that actually serves the composition—in this case, leading into one of the most abstract moments ever to grace a Tull album.

Any drummer interested in the evolution of advanced musical ideas in rock music should listen carefully to *Thick As A Brick*. And record geeks should scour eBay or other such places for the *original* vinyl, the version with the fold-out faux newspaper. (As Anderson figures in the interview tagged onto the recent CD reissue of *TAAB*, the packaging took more time to produce than the music.) A peak moment in rock drumming history.

Adam Budofsky

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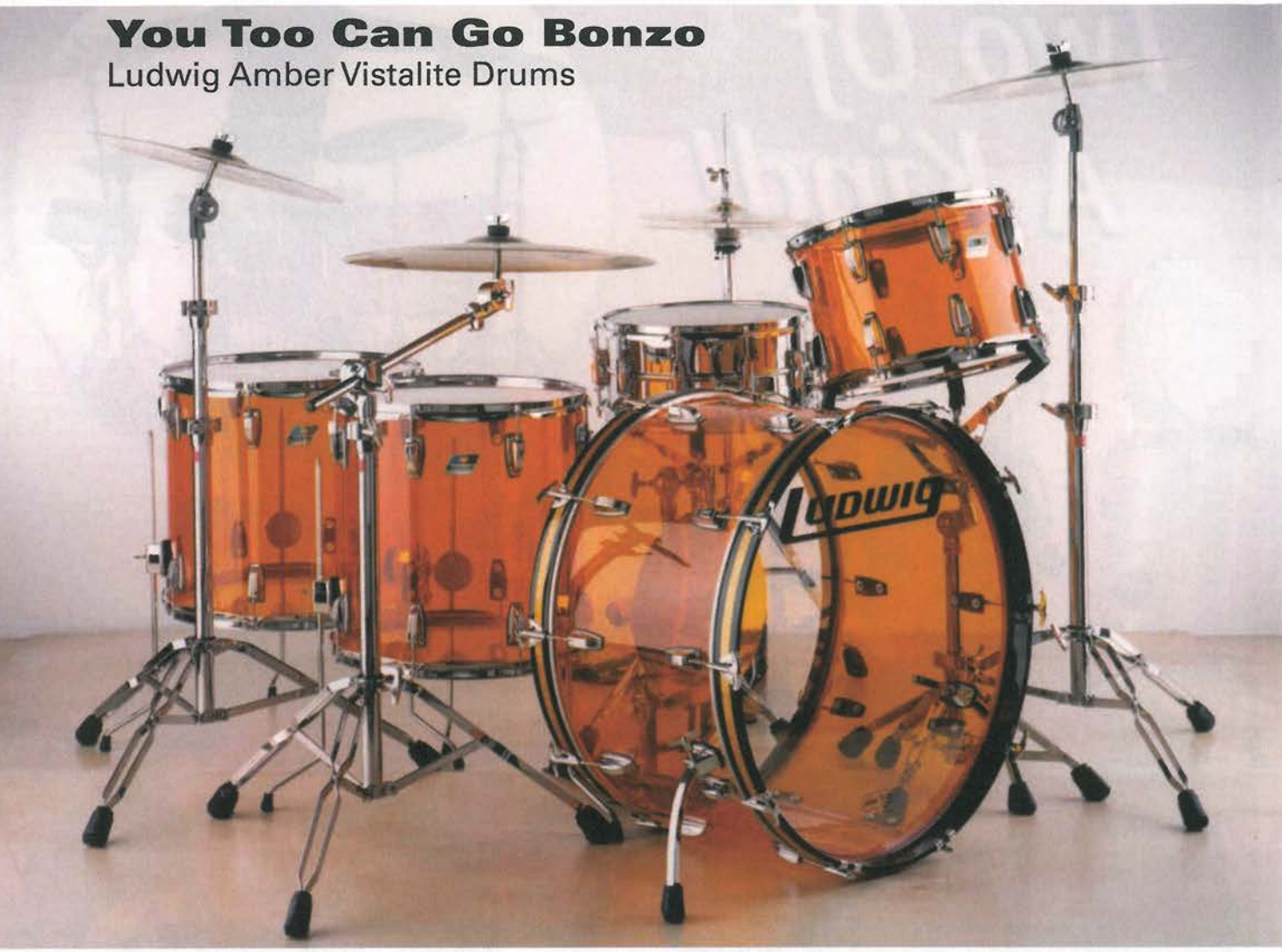
You Too Can Go Bonzo

Ludwig Amber Vistalite Drums



Ludwig's Amber Vistalite drum outfit is similar to the kit played by Led Zeppelin's John Bonham in the early 1970s. It features a 14x26 bass drum with vintage-style T-rods and claws, curved retractable spurs, and gold sparkle inlays on the high-gloss black maple hoops. The 10x14 rack tom is mounted on a snare stand, as Bonzo would have positioned it. The snare drum is the traditional 6½x14 chrome-plated aluminum Supra-Phonic model. Two floor toms—16x16 and 16x18—complete the kit. All drums are fitted with '70s-era large Classic lugs and blue & olive badges. Ludwig's Heavy Clear heads provide durability and a see-through appearance.

The "Zep Set" can be ordered as a shell pack or with a Ludwig Modular double-braced hardware package, including a 900 series snare stand, two straight cymbal stands, one boom cymbal stand, a Pro-Float hi-hat stand, and a Pro bass drum pedal. A Speed King pedal and a 6½x14 Amber Vistalite snare drum are available options.

The complete kit with hardware lists for $4,495. The shell pack lists for $3,565.

(574) 522-1675, www.ludwig-drums.com.

Puttin' The Hammer Down

Premier Hammered Brass Modern Classic Snares

Premier has added a hammered brass shell to its premium Modern Classic range. The new drums are available in 5½x13 ($635), 5½x14 ($660), and 7x14 ($670) sizes. The 13" drum features an 8-lug configuration; the others feature 10-lug designs. All of the drums are finished in black nickel plating and are fitted with Everplay drumheads by Remo. Bearing edges and snare beds are said to be applied "with the same care and attention that characterize the entire Modern Classic range."

(781) 659-4969, www.premier-percussion.com.

Beginners' Luck

New Sabian B8 Models And Complete Sets

Sabian's B8 entry-level series now offers new sounds and larger sizes. The new B8 16" Chinese cymbal is said to be punchy, with a rapid decay rate. New 17" and 18" B8 thin crashes offer added power and projection over the more common 16" size.

For even more power, new 17", 19", and 20" B8 Rock crashes offer big, loud crash sounds. And the new 21" Rock ride is direct and penetrating, with a bell designed to cut cleanly through even the loudest music. B8 Rock models are crafted to create tonally tight, high-pitched, cutting sounds. They feature a bright finish and highly defined lathing.

Sabian also offers two B8 packaged sets. The B8 Complete Set contains a 10" splash, 14" medium hi-hats, 16" and 18" thin crashes, an 18" Chinese, and a 20" medium ride. For harder hitters, the B8 Rock Set contains 14" Rock Hats (a medium-heavy top/heavy bottom combination), 16" and 18" Rock crashes, and a 21" Rock ride. All cymbal sets are "Sonically Matched" at the factory for optimum sound and response compatibility.

(506) 272-2019, www.sabian.com.

Watch Those Curves!

Pearl Curved ICON Rack System

Pearl's ICON Rack System utilizes ribbed aluminum tubing and innovative clamping technology to provide rigid stability as well as flexibility in drum and cymbal placement. The new DR-501C rack ($249) offers a subtle curvature to facilitate a natural flow around a kit. Straight and curved side-expansion bars (DR501CE, $129) are available for complete fine-tuning of instrument placement.

In conjunction with the ICON rack, Pearl's new PCX-100 and PCX-200 clamps provide expansion capabilities and secure holding strength, utilizing UltraGrip wingnuts. The PCX-200 features a tilting clamp system for pinpoint positioning.

(615) 833-4477, www.pearldrum.com.

Russian Metal

Beni Custom Snare Drums

The Beni drum company isn't actually from Russia. However, their most popular custom snare-drum model is called the Black Russian, because it's created from a unique Russian metal. The drum is said to be able to reach low frequencies virtually unheard of in a metal-shell snare. Laser-cut bearing edges are extra thin, while snare beds are deep. The Black Russian is claimed to be "responsive to the slightest tap of a fingernail, yet able to be slammed without choking."

Beni sells direct in order to keep prices affordable while giving customers a direct line of communication to those who craft their drums. The 6½x14 Black Russian shown in the photo is priced at $595.

(888) 442-6235, www.benidrums.com.

Zil/Bill Combo

Zildjian K Custom Dry Complex Ride And Improved ZBT Line

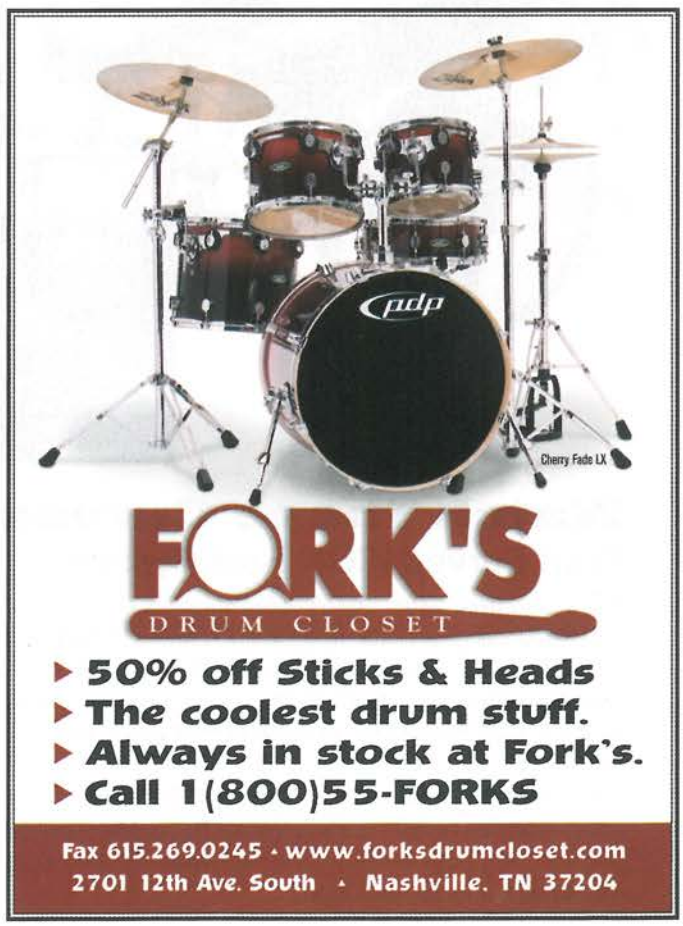
Zildjian's new K Custom Dry Complex ride is the culmination of two years' work involving Zildjian's Sound Lab Team and jazz luminary Bill Stewart.

The 22" cymbal features an extremely high profile and the largest bell of any K Custom ride cymbal (which is said to add to its range of complex overtones). To achieve its unique shape and texture, the cymbal is heavily hammered through four extensive processes. It's available in thin and medium-thin versions.

The K Custom Dry Complex ride employs the traditional K Custom lathing on the top of the cymbal, but it contains no tonal grooves (in order to give it a "loose" sound). The underside is lightly scored (except for the outside edge) to help contain the overtones. The cymbal is said to be "both dry and complex, with different sounds and colors ranging from airy, warm ride sounds to a nasty, quick crash." List price is $492.

At the other end of the experience scale, Zildjian has improved their ZBT Sheet Bronze entry-level cymbal line. With "a completely new appearance and advanced sonic qualities," the line now includes an 18" crash, as well as an Expander Set that includes an 18" crash and an 18" China. In addition, ZBT Band Pairs have been redesigned for easier playability and a more musical sound. ZBT cymbals can be purchased separately or in box sets. Representative prices include $58 for an 8" splash, $104 for a 16" crash, $121 for an 18" China, and $148 for a 20" ride.

(781) 871-2200, www.zildjian.com.



Hickory Smokin'

Pro-Mark Dave Lombardo, Greg Upchurch, And Stinger Drumsticks

Pro-Mark has added three new models to its line of American hickory drumsticks. The Dave Lombardo Autograph Model was designed by Slayer's long-time drummer for hard-hitting drummers who want a little extra reach. It's 16⅛" long and .630" in diameter, and features a nylon tip. List price is $13.50 per pair.

The stick designed by Puddle Of Mudd's Greg Upchurch measures 16¾" in length and .602" in diameter (the same as a standard 5B), and features an acorn-shaped wood tip. List price is $12.95 per pair.

The new Stinger model features an arrowhead-shaped wood tip. At 16⅛" long and .551" in diameter, it's said to be a versatile stick designed for added control of cymbal tones. List price is $12.50 per pair.

(877) PRO-MARK, www.promark.com.

You're Not Likely To Recycle This

Puresound Vintage-Style Aluminum UltraSonic Snare Drum

Unlike heavy, cast-aluminum drums, Puresound's new limited-edition 5x14 UltraSonic aluminum drum features a thin, resonant shell with machine-formed bearing edges—a design similar to vintage drums no longer available except from collectors. The drum is fitted with 16-strand Puresound wires, premium drumheads, chrome-plated solid-brass tube-lugs, heavy-duty (2.3 mm) steel counterhoops, and a serialized badge.

According to Puresound, the new drum combines aluminum's characteristic dryness and articulation with a more distinctive, wide-open, classic metal sound, enhanced projection, and excellent stick response. Each drum comes with a certificate of authenticity and a deluxe padded bag. List price is $995.

(818) 990-1562, www.puresoundpercussion.com.

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Hart Dynamics' new TE3.2 drum trigger system features improved triggering, durability, and the capability of dual (head and rim) triggering on all drums. It's now included in all of Hart's midrange and high-end electronic drumkits.

Hart has been offering dual-trigger technology since the introduction of the ACUPAD II drums in 1989. They are now including this feature in all their drums so that players can utilize all of today's sound-source technology. Complete drum systems are available from $799 for the Prodigy "mesh-head" entry-level set through the flagship Hart Professional series drumsets, starting at $3,599. All carry a lifetime guarantee.

(800) 769-5335, www.hartdynamics.com.

New Sounds

American Percussion Specialty Drums

American Percussion is a source for unique drums and percussion instruments of all descriptions—and some that defy description. In addition to exotic hand-made snare drums, original designs available from American Percussion include the DigiDrum, Tamba Drums, and Table Drums.

The DigiDrum measures about 16" deep by 9" wide, with a 7" playing surface. Its small extension arms have oval heads fitted with calf, goat, or plastic drumheads. List price with a padded case is $235 (or $210 without the arms).

Tamba Drums are snares, toms, and bass drums with tambourine jingles set into their shells. Complete Tamba drumkits featuring horizontally mounted bass drums are available. Pricing depends on size and jingle configuration.

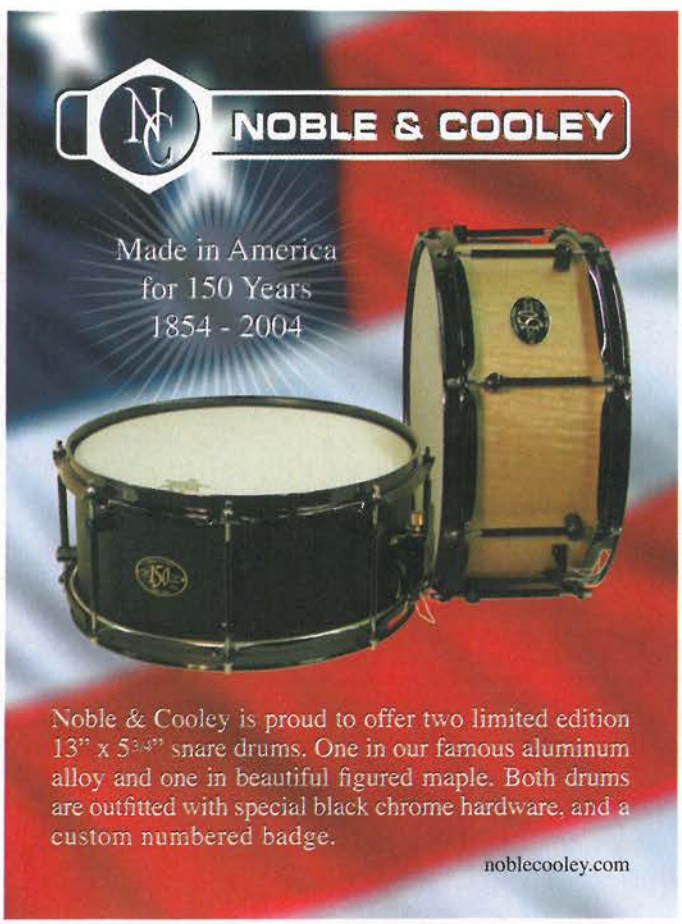
Table Drums feature fixed or tiltable frame drums from 10" to 22" in diameter, fitted with legs that enable them to be played in a freestanding configuration. Some feature a foot-operated bellows that forces air into the drum, giving a glissando effect when the drum is struck. A pair of 18" and 20" drums with bellows is priced at $875.

(845) 688-5299, www.americanpercussion.com.

Digi-Drum

Table Drum

Tamba snare drum



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Mark Bliesener And Steve Knopper: The Complete Idiot's Guide To Starting A Band (Alpha Books/Penguin Group)

This book includes pointers on how to start a band and keep it together, tips on how to work with managers and promoters, advice on booking your band at local clubs and venues, and ideas about choosing a look, style, and name. Also included is information on the details of making a recording, networking in the industry, the musical elements of a hit, and moving your band to the next level. List price is $18.95.

Robert Wolff: How To Make It In The New Music Business (Billboard Books)

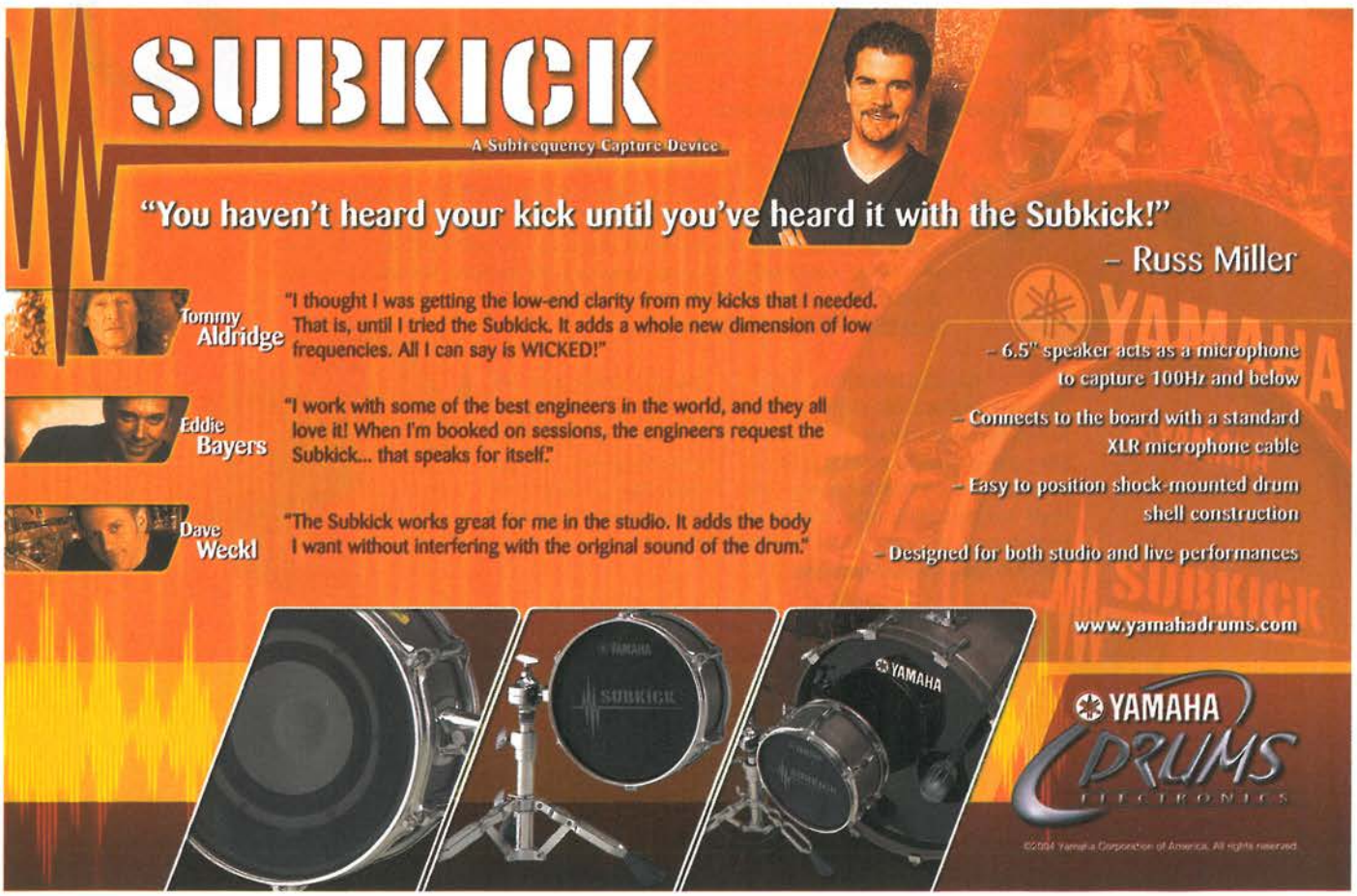
In thirteen lessons, this book's author teaches you why you no longer have to play by old music-business rules. The book contains information, inspiration, and advice to show you how to take control over your music, your product, and your dreams. Insider tips on writing, performing, and recording are offered by major industry figures including Diane Warren, Steve Lukather, Bob Clearmountain, and Bob Ludwig. List price is $19.95.

Tommy Igoe: Groove Essentials (Hudson Music)

This DVD is based on the definitive collection of contemporary rock, jazz, R&B/funk, and world/ethnic drumming styles contained in the *Groove Essentials* poster that Tommy Igoe and Vic Firth Drumsticks developed last year. On the enhanced DVD, Tommy explains and performs nearly four dozen of today's most popular drum patterns. According to Tommy, mastering these grooves will greatly expand any drummer's knowledge and versatility, while giving him or her the confidence and ability to perform in virtually any musical situation. Each groove is demonstrated at two different tempos with a real band track featuring top musicians. The package includes a free *Groove Essentials* poster (courtesy of Vic Firth), which contains fully notated examples of every one of the grooves on the disc. List price is $24.95.

Cassio Duarte: Introduction To Brazilian Percussion (LP/Warner Bros.)

This DVD fosters a learning experience that grows slowly and patiently over the course of the program. Coverage includes important styles like samba, partido alto, baiao, and batucada. Duarte teaches by referencing the carnaval-style track that opens the DVD, disassembling it into various component rhythms, and discussing the instruments that make them come to life. (An included complete LP catalog enables viewers to examine these instruments.) Cassio zeroes in on each instrument and its relation to the final track, then records that instrument in multi-track. At appropriate times, windows appear, zooming in on technical details. Narration is in English and in Portuguese. List price is $15.95.



And What's More

PINTECH USA has acquired the line of acrylic cymbal and percussion trigger instruments known as **Visu-Lite** from Electronic Percussion Systems of Saint Cloud, Minnesota. Visu-Lite trigger instruments are known for their eye-catching appeal and high reliability. The Visu-Lite series will complement Pintech's extensive line of electronic drumkits.
(800) 445-0506, www.visu-lite.com, www.pintechusa.com.

SKB's new 3I Series cases meet military specifications for protection under extreme conditions. Each case is molded of ultra high-strength polypropylene copolymer resin, with a gasketed, water- and dust-tight submersible design that is resistant to corrosion and impact damage. Additional features include a continuous molded-in hinge, a "trigger release" latch system, snap-down cushion-grip handles, and an automatic ambient pressure equalization valve.

Each 3I Series case is backed by SKB's unconditional lifetime warranty. Available in black with three interior options (empty, cubed foam, or padded dividers), the 3I series provides extra protection for a wide variety of electronic and musical gear. Cases come in three sizes.
(800) 410-2024, www.skbcases.com.

BLACK SWAMP PERCUSSION DYNAMICX drumset snare units are available with either steel alloy or phosphor bronze wires, and they come in a variety of lengths and strand quantities to suit any application. Stainless-steel end plates and silver-soldered joints make DYNAMICX snares exceptionally light, for quick response and less dampening. The snares are said to remain crisp and focused throughout the entire dynamic range, and to add depth to any drum's sound. List prices range from $30.95 to $46.95.
(616) 738-3190, www.dynamicx.

MEINL's Byzance series brilliant-finish cymbals are said to sound brighter and richer than cymbals in the regular finish, yet retain the dark characteristics for which B20 bronze cymbals are known. Brilliant Byzance cymbals come in most popular sizes and weights, from 8" splashes to 20" rides. They're covered with a two-year limited warranty.
(615) 227-5090, www.meinlcymbals.com.

A new hand-held tambourine is available in **MEINL**'s professional percussion line. The aluminium jingles and ABS plastic frame (in blue only) make the instrument extremely light in order to facilitate extended and energetic playing. The jingles are said to produce a soft, harmonic sound for use in situations where delicacy and sensitivity are required.
(615) 227-5090, www.meinlpercussion.com.

PEARL's Eliminator pedals offer full "tunability," from the amount of slip on the footboard to the power range of the beater (via Pearl's exclusive interchangeable cams). Now you can take it up a notch with two new cams: Purple (for an aggressive action) and Yellow (for an inverse response). For even more bass attack, a new beater weight system slips and locks over the beater in seconds. Cams and weights are available as a kit (EPAP, $19) and separately.
(615) 833-4477, www.pearldrum.com.

ZILDJIAN has added Band Pairs to their ZXT Titanium cymbal range. The ZXT line combines Zildjian's Sheet Bronze alloy with an exclusive titanium finish. The new Band Pairs are designed to bring the sonic qualities, durability, and exciting appearance of the ZXT Titanium range into the band, drum corps, and education market. The 18" Band Pairs are said to be bright and full-bodied, with excellent projection qualities, a sharp high-pitched attack, and a fast decay. They list for $468.
(781) 871-2200, www.zildjian.com.

NINO PERCUSSION's new Ganza Shakers offer professional-quality sounds, but are designed to fit children's hands. With rattan resonating bodies and coconut-shell bottoms, they're said to produce "a voluminous sound with a sharp and sizzling character." Two sizes are available. All Nino Percussion products conform to LGA safety standards for ages three and up.
(615) 227-5090, www.ninopercussion.com.

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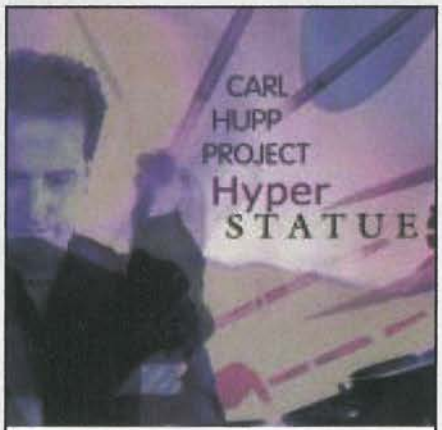

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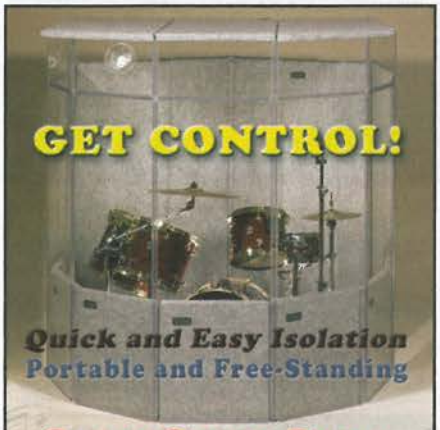

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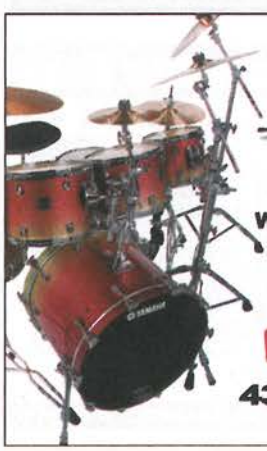

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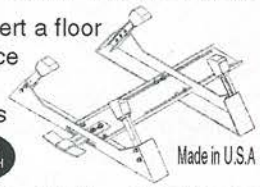

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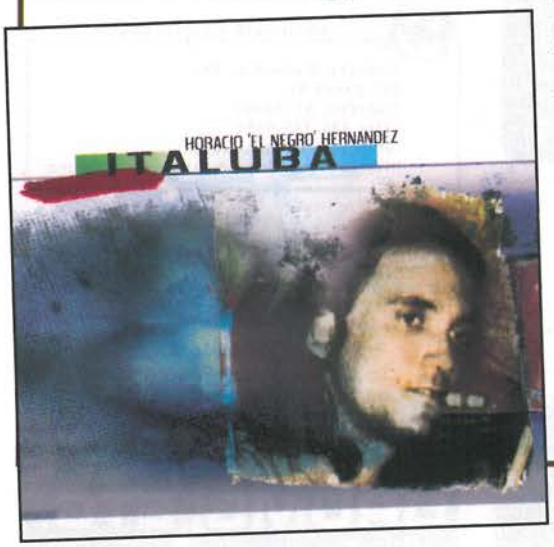
RECORDINGS

rating scale poor classic

Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez Italuba (Pimienta)



Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez introduced American drummers to the revolutionary left-foot clave technique several years ago. Now, on his first release as bandleader, the drummer takes his advanced "one-man percussion section" to new heights, performing complex Latin/jazz/fusion material with a blazing all-Cuban quartet featuring bass, keyboards, and trumpet. Negro's fusion of traditional Latin styles with high-energy modern techniques sounds virtually impossible for a single player to execute. Once again raising the bar in modern drumming techniques, with this recording Hernandez solidifies his place as one of today's most innovative drumming masters. (www.pimientarecords.com) **Mike Haid**

Phish Undermind (Elektra)

There's probably no intended double meaning behind the *Undermind* line "No more fish in the sea." Yet in one obvious way it's true: This is the final Phish studio album. After the unfussy experimental bent of *Round Room*, *Undermind* is a return to the straightforward rock tunes the band has long favored. **JON FISHMAN,** usually a proponent of clean, clear drum sounds, really mixes it up tonally, with huge Bonham reverb here and a dry, thumping sound there. His parts feel great, there's just not a lot of inspiration in the songs themselves. At least they squeezed in a patented barbershop-quartet number. **Michael Parillo**

Killswitch Engage The End Of Heartache (Roadrunner)

It might be "the end of heartache," but it's clearly not the end of bestial (and curiously melodic) metal. Killswitch Engage attack in a diverse way on their third album, blending Slayer-meets-Pantera thrash, stylish Euro-metal (think In Flames), and Hatebreed-ish mosh-core. During many tunes, new vocalist **Howard Jones** juggles a maniacal roar and a heartfelt croon with definite flair. Meanwhile, new drummer **JUSTIN FOLEY** anchors the sweat-inducing onslaught with a massive kick, stylish tom work, and rhythmic flexibility. Midway through, Killswitch switches gears with the acoustic "Inhale"—until Foley erupts with a whirlwind intro on "Breathe Life." Engaging stuff. **Jeff Perlah**

Judas Priest Metalogy (Legacy/Columbia)

Judas Priest have always featured a ferocious and somewhat signature drum formula (even though they've had so many guys behind the kit). The four CDs in this lavish box set, which was planned around the time Priest reunited with original singer **Rob Halford**, presents remastered album tracks, B-sides, previously unreleased live gems, and a newly unearthed demo track. Especially killer is the drumming of **DAVE HOLLAND**, who played with the band from 1980's *British Steel* through 1988's *Ram It Down*, and the busier **SCOTT TRAVIS**, who joined for '90's *Painkiller*. Both complemented Priest's propulsive dual guitars and Halford's soaring scream. A DVD showcasing a thunderous '82 gig, as well as a beefy booklet, are included. An immense offering from the Metal Gods. **Jeff Perlah**

Hossam Ramzy Sabla Tolo II (Arcmusic.com)

Known for his work with Page & Plant, Peter Gabriel, Joan Armatrading, and Chick Corea, **HOSSAM RAMZY** is Egypt's "ambassador of rhythm," earning his title with a catalog's worth of CDs and DVDs that contain a wealth of Egyptian, Middle Eastern, and Moroccan drumming. As described on the cover of his latest CD, "The art of Oriental dance is to visually hear the music." And *Sabla Tolo 2* certainly brings many images to mind. No need to "squint" to hear these multi-layered tracks—just check out the percussion tracks, which move forward with the momentum of a dancing drum army. With stops and starts, speeding up and slowing down, the rhythms carry you away. This is one *huge* drum lesson. **David Licht**

Ghost Hypnotic Underworld (Drag City)

Creating progressive epics like *Snuffbox Immanence* and *Tune In, Turn On, Free Tibet* has been demented child's-play for Japan's freak phantasms, Ghost. A loose-knit collective who've released seven albums since the early '90s, Ghost are the Star Trek travelers of Japan's experimental scene. *Hypnotic Underworld* begins almost amorphously, recalling the Krautrock of Amon Düül, with drummer **JUNZO TATEIWA** slowly raising the intensity from gentle rim work to fiery rolls, accompanied note-for-note by searing guitar, wailing soprano sax, and keyboard madness. Further tracks explore the outer reaches of speed-jazz-metal, California psychedelia, Brit-prog folk, and even a Syd Barrett cover. Absolutely fascinating. **Ken Micallef**

Bad Acid Trip

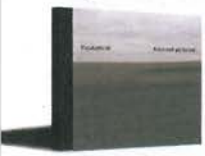
Lynch The Weirdo (Serjical Strike)

Deftly fusing the quirkiness of bands like DEVO and The Melvins with the trashy, hurried punk edge of The Locust, Los Angeles' Bad Acid Trip provides one absurdly dizzying jaunt, all without the assistance of their moniker's narcotics. Blazingly fast drummer **JOSE PEREZ** constantly ignites his shells with ridiculous blast-beat fury. And when he's not preoccupied with attempts to destroy the sound barrier—check out the ending of "Beef Moo" for one of many startling examples—Perez toys with serrated patterns, generally slamming away with reckless abandon. Rarely has music been presented in such an intriguing sonic blur. **Waleed Rashidi**

Angélique Kidjo Oyaya! (Columbia)

Always game for style-mixing, Afro-pop vocalist Kidjo this time wraps her African roots in the rhythms of the Caribbean. The results are joyfully intoxicating. Singing African and French lyrics, Kidjo's lush, round voice is as fiery and sensual as ever. And the rhythm tracks are volcanic. LA studio star **MICHITO SANCHEZ** delivers inspired percussion. And he's joined by the fabulous **WALTER RODRIGUEZ**, a rising drummer who had previously been taken under Alex Acuña's wing. Their irresistible airtight groove lends an aggressive modern edge to the diverse island rhythms. You will *not* sit still. **Jeff Potter**

Equilateral Also Not Pictured (x-Tet)



Equilateral, a New York–based jazz trio/quartet speaking in the "chordless" voices of sax, trumpet, bass, and drums, takes us into the high altitude of the avant-garde. This is original music that steers well clear of worn clichés and formulae, demanding close attention from players and audience alike. Drummer/percussionist **JONATHAN MELE** contributes as a full partner here, as comfortable going way outside as he is playing ballads. What we have here is smart, original music played by young pros brave enough to celebrate musical possibilities. That's exactly the attitude that will keep jazz from becoming predictable. **Bill Kiely**

John Abercrombie Quartet

Class Trip (ECM)

On their second outing, Abercrombie's latest lineup unfurls collective improvisation effortlessly from a single tongue. Featuring the unusual format of violin (**Mark Feldman**), guitar (**Abercrombie**), bass (**Marc Johnson**), and drums (**JOEY BARON**), the quartet breathes a lithe, yearning, and beautiful sound. As usual, Abercrombie crafts more fresh ideas in a solo than most can muster in a box set. And Baron's a master of "conversational" interplay. Leading and responding at the same time, the drummer composes rather than chatters. Implying the pulse, he weaves a swirling continuum across bar lines. Few bands use freedom so wisely. **Jeff Potter**

Pip Pyle's Bash!

Belle Illusion (Cuneiform)

PIP PYLE, a veteran of '70s art rock bands Hatfield And The North, National Health, and Gong, was a leading drummer of the Canterbury scene, which produced pastoral fusion that was more about musicality than muscle. Recorded live in Seattle and Paris with a sympathetic quartet, this collection of Pyle's tunes mirrors his drumming: Exquisitely lithe and graceful fusion filled with rich harmonics and extremely organic interplay. There are no fusion clichés here, only thoughtful excursions that continually hold one's interest. Shades of Pyle's old bands permeate *Belle Illusion*. But ultimately this is fresh improvisation based on intellect and emotion.

Ken Micallef

Various Artists Happy Birthday Newport: 50 Swinging Years! (Columbia/Legacy)

Celebrating The Newport Jazz Festival's 50th anniversary, this three-CD set compiles marvelous previously released festival highlights. Don't expect an historic overview, though, as it features Columbia artists exclusively and, curiously, most tracks are limited to the latter '50s. Twenty-eight cuts span from true classic moments such as Miles' "'Round Midnight" to the strangely misguided mess of Chuck Berry performing "Sweet Little Sixteen" accompanied by jazz cats. Either way, drummers will relish inspired performances by **ROY HAYNES, BARRETT DEEMS, SAM WOODYARD, JO JONES, SONNY GREER, MAX ROACH, CONNIE KAY, CHARLIE PERSIP, FREDDIE WAITS, JIMMY COBB, FRANKIE DUNLOP, JOE MORELLO, TONY WILLIAMS**, and other greats.

Jeff Potter

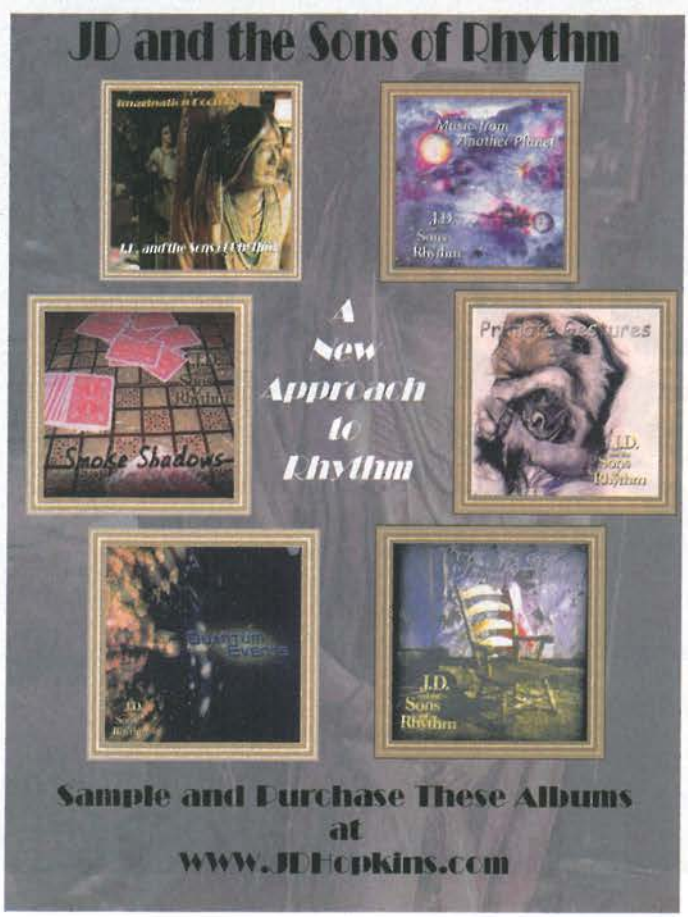
World Beats

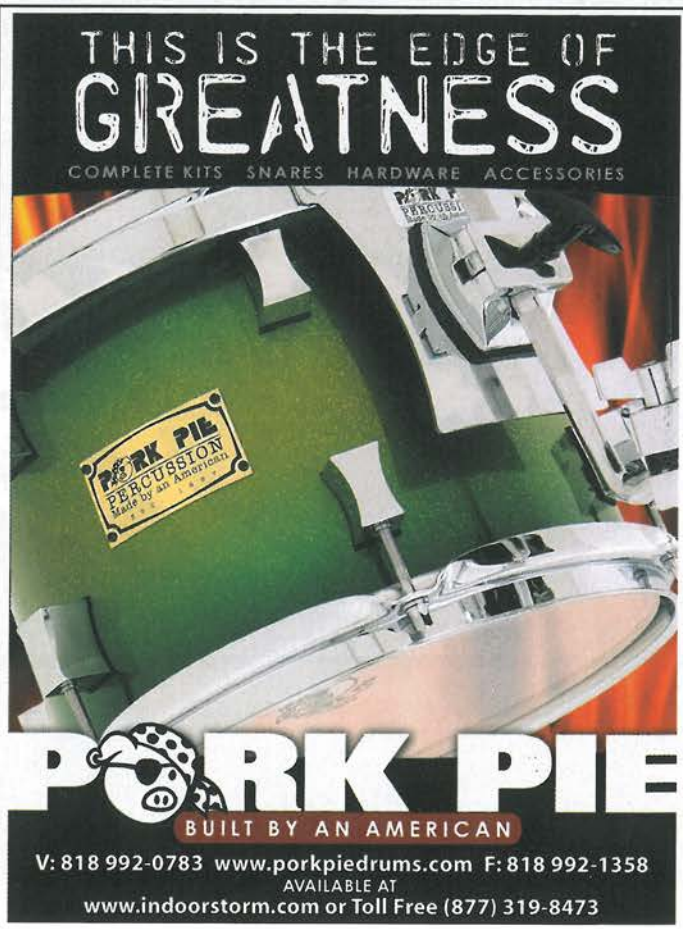
Young NYC vibist **Damon Grant** brings together some very fine jazz and Afro-Cuban players to perform on *Sonidos Nuevos [New Sounds]*. Drummers **GERALD MYLES** and **TONY ESCAPA** play the Afro-Cuban jazz with conviction and fire, while **HORACIO "EL NEGRO" HERNANDEZ** turns loose a whirlwind 6/8, among other highlights on this promising, cohesive debut from Grant. (www.damongrant.com)

Speaking of El Negro, we've often been amazed by his hands and feet over the years. Paired with Japanese fusion guitarist **Kazumi Watanabe** and bassist **Richard Bona** on Watanabe's *Mo' Bop*, Hernandez proves he can also sound like Vinnie Colaiuta if he wants to, tossing off one impressive flourish after another. This release may not contain Watanabe's best writing, but from a drumming standpoint, this is El Negro unleashed. (East Works Entertainment, www.ewe.co.jp)

NOEL OKIMOTO's debut as leader, *'Ohana*, serves notice of some serious musicianship. Twelve original compositions hint at the drummer's involvement with the music. He is supportive and risk-taking, and has a great feel for swing. But Okimoto can also propel a 7/8 Latin groove with fire. He uses sounds extremely well, taming and tailoring each percussion instrument for the texture needed by the song. (www.noelokimoto.com)

Robin Tolleson





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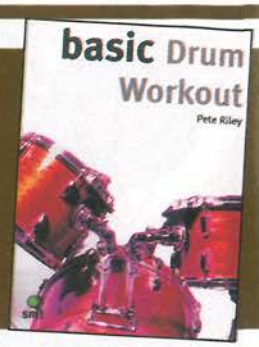


There is much more useful information in this pocket-sized book than the name implies. Rather than attempting to be an intensive study, it's more of an overview—from many angles—of what playing the drumset and being a well-educated drummer is all about. Insightful quotes from the pros on such topics as copying styles from the masters, tuning, being a tasteful player, and learning how to find your own sound are scattered throughout the book. Other helpful topics: recording yourself, playing to a click, and warming up. Chapter titles include Set Up & Technique, Rudiments, Drum Set Vocabulary, Reading, and Drum Sounds. This pint-sized paperback is packed with useful drumming info, professional wisdom, and notated practice exercises, and should be in every drummer's back pocket. **Mike Haid**

DVDs

Frank Zappa Baby Snakes (Eagle Vision)

level: all, $24.95

Baby Snakes neatly offers a vision of Zappa's multi-faceted brilliance: groundbreaking avant-rock composition, incendiary performance, biting social commentary, and mammothly talented musical support (not to mention his own death-defying guitar workouts). Taking this 1979 film into a whole *other* dimension is the copious employment of Bruce Bickford's clay-animation sequences. The players include guitarist **Adrian Belew**, percussionist **ED MANN**, and drummer **TERRY BOZZIO**, who appear in live and (fascinating) rehearsal settings. Anyone familiar with Zappa's ultra-demanding work would assume Terry had his act together, and they'd be right. But the fire and personality he brought to Zappa's music really had no precedent. And now that this 90-minute feature has been expanded to its intended length with the reintroduction of an hour of cut footage, there's all the more glorious mind-blowing to be had. Some cool extras, too. Get this. **Adam Budofsky**

Art Blakey & The Jazz Messengers

Jazz Legends: Live At The Village Vanguard Club New York 1982

(Quantum Leap)

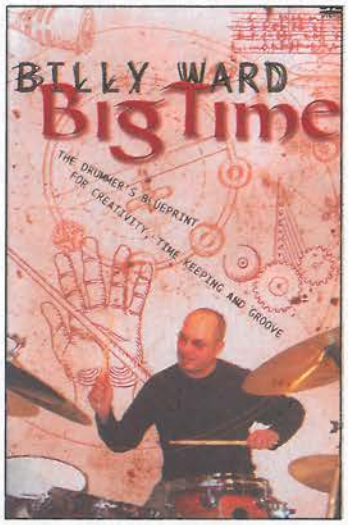
level: all, $19.95

Problems, problems. Let's start with the title: Blakey's set is *not* from The Vanguard. Am I a hipster Sherlock who realized that rows of windows wouldn't be found in the world-famous *basement*? No, it's because I bothered to watch the first minute that opens with the club's neon sign, "Seventh Avenue South." Obviously, the producers never bothered to watch, and don't care about other facts either. Blakey's segment, from the 30-minute TV show *The Jazz Life*, captures The Messengers burning bright as always. Nowhere does the packaging mention that the frontline just happens to be the young **Wynton** and **Branford Marsalis** along with **Billy Pierce**—one of the most historic of late Messenger units. The disc "extra," another episode of the TV show, features a blistering set by **Johnny Griffin**. Drummer **KENNY WASHINGTON** delivers a blazing stamina-buster here. But there's no mention of the sidemen in the closing credits, and ditto with the packaging. There's jazz history here. Show the artists a little respect! (www.qleap.co.uk) **Jeff Potter**

Billy Ward Big Time (Hal Leonard)

level: all, $29.95

Billy Ward's got the animated verve of a late-night motivational speaker combined with hipness and humor. Sitting at his kit, the shaven-headed groover shares his wisdom to a rapt student group. Unlike typical technique/exercise instructional DVDs, Ward's session emphasizes the "mechanics" of mental and physical focus that will enhance groove, time, and sound. There's also plenty of dazzling footage of Billy stretching out in solos and in duets with a bassist. Always engaging, this upbeat guru will inspire you to embrace the "Big Time" mind set on your next gig. **Jeff Potter**



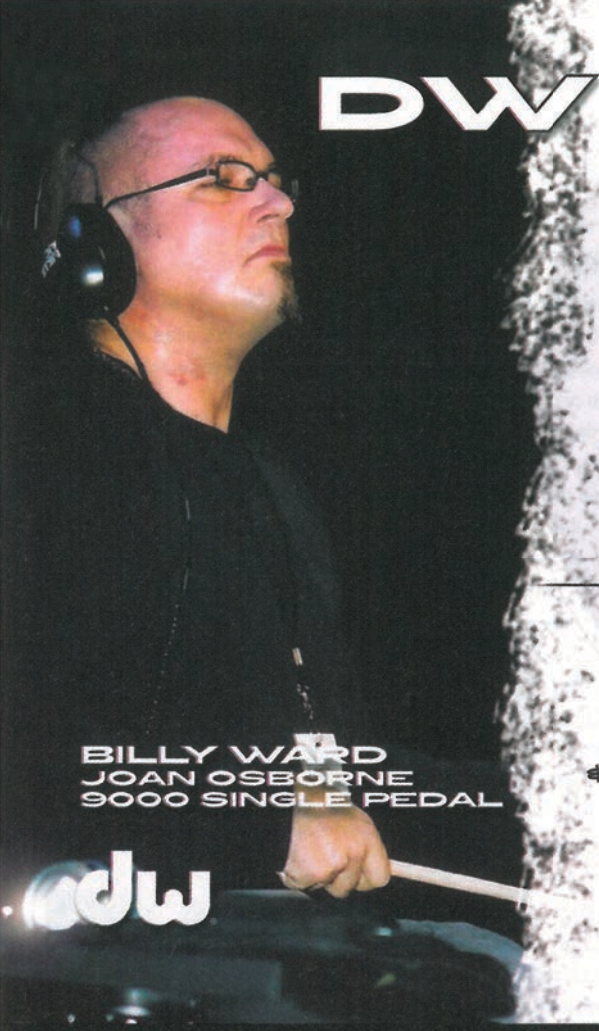
Kenwood Dennard

The Studio/Touring Drummer (Berklee Press)

level: intermediate to advanced, $19.95

Dennard shares little of his studio and touring experience with Jaco, Dizzy, Sting, and others here. Rather, this DVD focuses on his concept of drumming. "Learn the melodies—embellish, complement, and solo over [them]," he says. And that's just what he does, singing the melodies to "Donna Lee," "Teen Town," "The Chicken," and others, while drumming over them in supportive, melodic, and solo roles. Now, there is explanation of *why* he's doing what he's doing, but nothing about *how* he does it. Tightening up these parts would have helped. And the drums are not recorded well, which is unforgivable. **Robin Tolleson**

To hear many of the artists reviewed in this month's *Critique*, be sure to tune in to MD Radio at www.moderndrummer.com.



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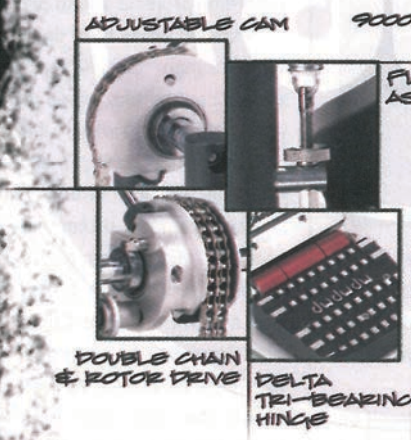

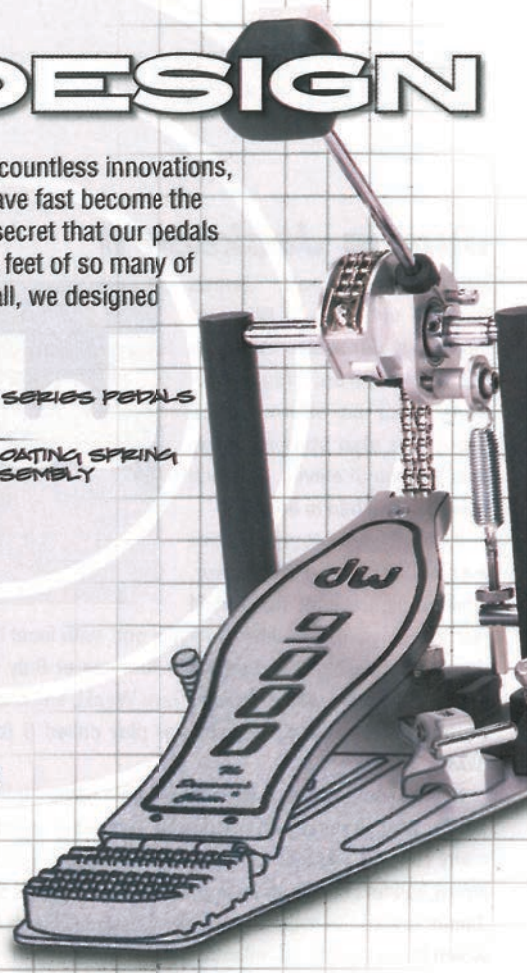

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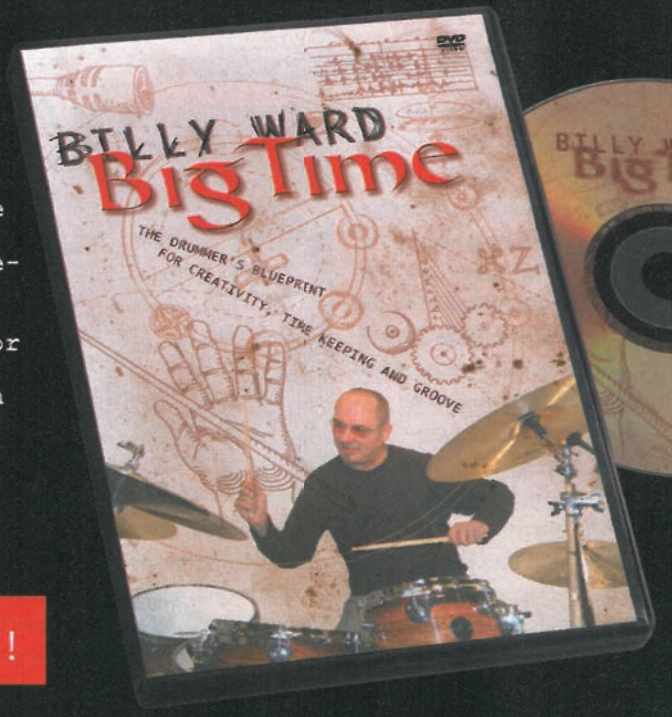

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James Jackson II

Twenty-six-year-old James Jackson of St. Louis, Missouri began his percussive career at the age of three, playing the congas for an ethnic dance group. He also studied piano until the age of eleven, at which point he switched to drums.

James' first playing outlet was his church's choir. Later, while in high school, he studied jazz and music theory while "playing out" with local bands. At the same time he absorbed the influences of Billy Cobham, Dennis Chambers, Will Kennedy, Dave Weckl, and Steve Gadd. He also toured with a Gospel stage play called *O Lord What Now.*

In the ensuing years James has made a name for himself on the St. Louis scene, performing and recording regularly with many regional artists. One of those is a band called BOOM (www.boomstl.com), which gigs three to four nights per week. James is also the regular drummer at Grace Church St. Louis, which has a weekly attendance of over six thousand.

James performs and records on a Pearl BRX kit with a Fibes maple snare and Paiste cymbals. His goal is to establish himself as a session player. His demo, which features pop/fusion, rock, and swinging jazz pieces, clearly displays talent and versatility that should help him reach his goal. (For more info go to www.jamesajackson2.com.)

Kellis Oliver

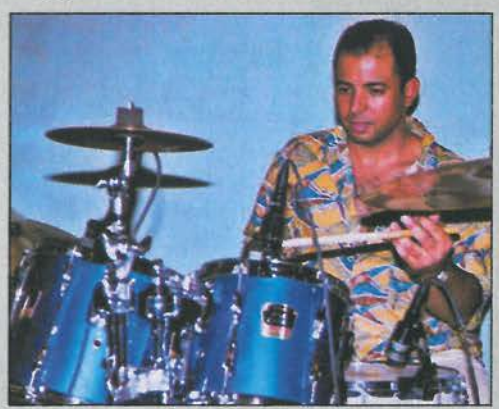
At the age of forty-three, Mesquite, Texas drummer Kellis Oliver is in a transition phase. After five years of club dates in and around the Dallas area with local favorites Durango, he resigned the drum chair this past February to work on various recording projects and to play at his church.

"I stayed pretty busy doing the 'weekend warrior' thing a couple of times a month with Durango," says Kellis, "as well as the occasional wedding or corporate gig. We played country hits, blues jams, and pop/rock. The band also got great response to its original material, which was released on a CD called *Lost In Texas* [www.durangotx.com] in 2003. These days, though, I play regularly for more than a thousand people at church. I spend the rest of my musical time recording."

Kellis came to drumming naturally. His parents had a country & western band, and around the time Kellis was fourteen their group needed a drummer. He was given the job, and was immediately hooked. Over the next few years he improved his playing abilities and widened his musical perspective by listening to such drummers as Hal Blaine, Frank Beard, Jim Keltner, and John Bonham. He got into recording on projects with the praise & worship team at his family's church.

Today, Kellis's goals are to continue to develop as a performer while getting involved in more session work and teaching. For equipment he switches between a black Ludwig Vistalite kit and a marine-blue fade Tama Starclassic Maple, and he uses various Zildjian cymbals to suit the playing situation.

Rafael Monteagudo



Drummer/percussionist/educator Rafael Monteagudo hails from Havana, Cuba, where he studied drumset and percussion from the age of eight. He attended the Maximo Gomez School Of The Arts, as well as Cuba's prestigious National School Of The Arts. Later, he taught and performed extensively in Cuba, Italy, and Spain.

Since moving to the US in 1999, Rafael has been performing full-time with jazz, fusion, and Afro-Cuban groups in the Washington DC area. Performance venues have included Washington's Cherry Blossom Festival, Blues Alley nightclub, Kennedy Center, and Smithsonian Institution. He is also featured on recordings by Cuban band Calle 42, jazz artist Walter Bell, and contemporary Christian artist Gilchrist Sprauve.

Rafael currently teaches at the Latin American Folk Institute in Maryland. He also conducts master classes and workshops at percussion institutes, schools, and universities, specializing in the translation of authentic Afro-Cuban percussion rhythms from congas, bata, and timbales to the drumset. Rafael's educational efforts are supported by an endorsement from Sabian cymbals.

If you'd like to appear in *On The Move*, send us a CD, cassette, DVD, or videotape of your best work (preferably both solo and with a band) on three or four songs, along with a brief bio sketch and a high-quality color or black & white close-up photo. (Polaroids are not acceptable. Photos will not be paid for or credited.) The bio sketch should include your full name and age, along with your playing style(s), influences, current playing situation (band, recording project, freelance artist, etc.), how often and where you are playing, and what your goals are (recording artist, session player, local career player, etc.). Include any special items of interest pertaining to what you do and how you do it, and a list of the equipment you use regularly. Send your material to On The Move, Modern Drummer Publications, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. Material **cannot** be returned, so please **do not** send original tapes or photos.

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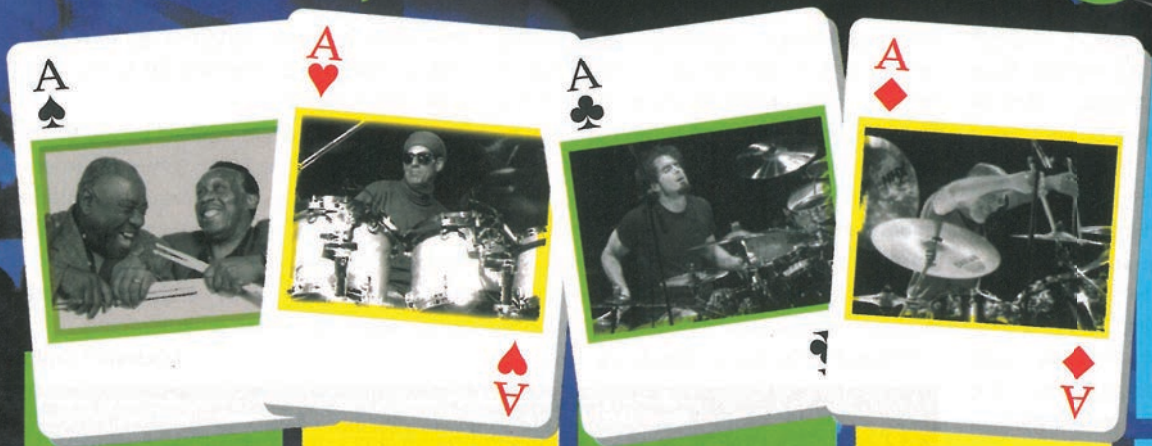

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Masters Of Spirit

The house lights went down at New York City's Joe's Pub, and a programmed drone sound began oozing out of the PA. Then came the swelling hum of trap drummer Franklin Kiermyer's gong. Master vocalist/percussionist T.V. Gopalakrishnan sang soaring syllables of South Indian devotional music, and his notes faded into the throaty Andean flute melodies of Hilario Soto "Ilawi." Bao'an Cao of China then took a solo on his bowed violin-like instrument, the erhu, and Debashish Battacharya's fingers danced on the fretboard of his Indian slide guitar, which is played like a lap-steel guitar and sounds like a cross between the sitar, sarod, and vina. Kiermyer, from the US, played a fluttering brush solo, and Gopalakrishnan unleashed a stunning series of rhythms on the mridangam, a two-headed conga-type drum placed across the lap and played with the fingers.

This was Masters Of Spirit, five men from four countries, improvising together to "unleash the heart of compassion that lies at the root of each of their seemingly disparate traditions." Remarkably, each player stuck to his classic musical style, without altering or homogenizing it to connect more easily with his international bandmates. There were many solo spots throughout the hour-long concert where the spotlight passed from man to man, but the group didn't shy away from presenting its diverse set of styles and instruments in combination. It was an ambitious goal for musicians who could barely communicate with one another verbally. But it led to some sparkling and inspired pairings. In particular, the blend of Andean flute and Chinese erhu—each playing long, haunting notes—was unique and magical.

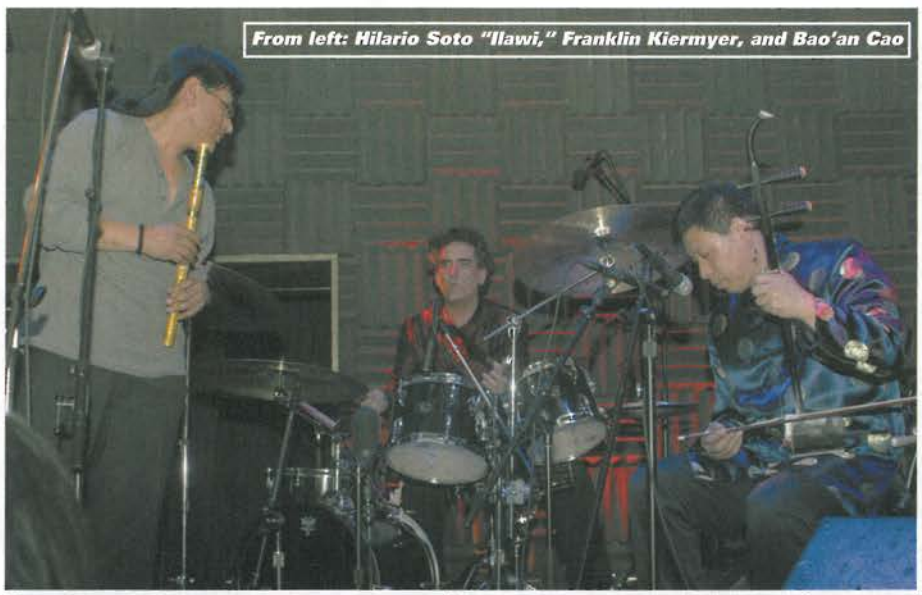
The deepest musical connection was found between the two Indian musicians. Though Gopalakrishnan is from the south and Battacharya from the north, the men nonetheless share a frame of reference and, despite the improvisatory framework, were able to hit certain rhythmic patterns in unison—one of the hallmarks of Indian classical music. The Indians also broadcast a playful sense of humor, smiling often and cleverly finishing each other's musical sentences.

Drummer Kiermyer, who is also Masters Of Spirit's musical director, presided over the affair with a gentle touch, prompting the next soloist or signaling an approaching ending with a nod. He was clearly keen to let the music unfold naturally, without too much guidance. At the kit, he mostly stuck with brushes, and he favored a kinetic free-jazz style that emphasized all of his drums equally. Flurried combinations of single and double strokes were his main plan of attack, which complemented the longer notes of the flute and stringed instruments.

Though Kiermyer certainly got the chance to shine, he seemed glad to let Gopalakrishnan really strut his stuff on mridangam. Indeed, Gopalakrishnan is a riveting performer, and he slapped and caressed his drum with verve and authority to produce a stunning range of tones. Perched high on a platform to the right of the other players, Gopalakrishnan, the eldest member of Masters Of Spirit, was often the focal point.

This concert was presented by the Great Drum Foundation, a New York–based nonprofit organization that unites musicians from diverse spiritual traditions, to "move beyond our prejudice to realize compassion and a world of unity in diversity." For more information, visit www.greatdrum.org.

Michael Parillo



From left: Hilario Soto "Ilawi," Franklin Kiermyer, and Bao'an Cao

T.V. Gopalakrishnan

Debashish Battacharya

DW Artist Gathering Salutes Chapin

Drum Workshop held its first-ever East Coast artist gathering this past May 20, at S.I.R. Studios in New York City. The event drew dozens of drum notables from the NYC area—some of whom were DW endorsers and some of whom were not. The evening was dedicated to a spirit of drum camaraderie that transcended corporate affiliations. Drummers in attendance who are DW endorsers included Tommy Igoe, Billy Ward, Joe Franco, and Tony Royster Jr.

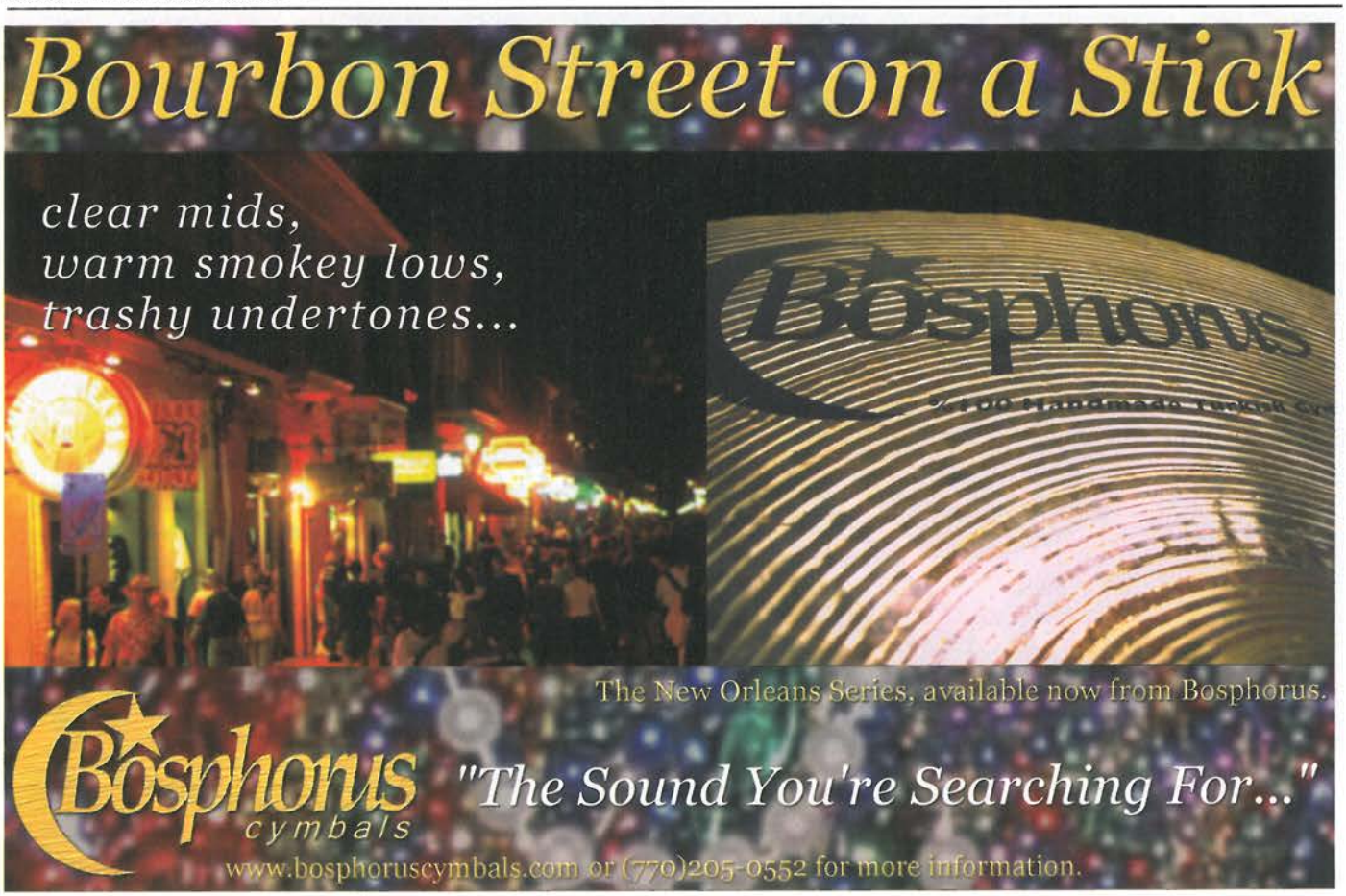
Also on the agenda for the evening was a salute to drummer, educator, author, and long-time DW clinician Jim Chapin. DW founder Don Lombardi, as well as vice president and drum designer John Good, regaled the crowd with humorous stories about Jim. Then they offered touching testimonials regarding Jim's contribution to Drum Workshop as a company, and to drumming as a whole. They also presented Jim with a huge plaque that featured a bass drum head signed by every employee at DW.

DW founder Don Lombardi (left) and vice president John Good (right) flank the inimitable Jim Chapin.

The celebration concluded with a song performed by Jim's son, noted folk singer Tom Chapin. Titled "Listening To A Distant Drummer," the biographical song told the story of how Jim Chapin became a drummer, was referred to legendary teacher Sanford Moeller by Gene Krupa, authored his seminal book, and ultimately passed on his love of music to his sons (Tom, Steve, and the late singer/ songwriter Harry Chapin).

To no one's surprise, Jim recounted a few stories of his own, and also performed on one of the several DW kits on display. All those in attendance applauded enthusiastically, showing their heartfelt admiration for this drumming icon.

Rick Van Horn



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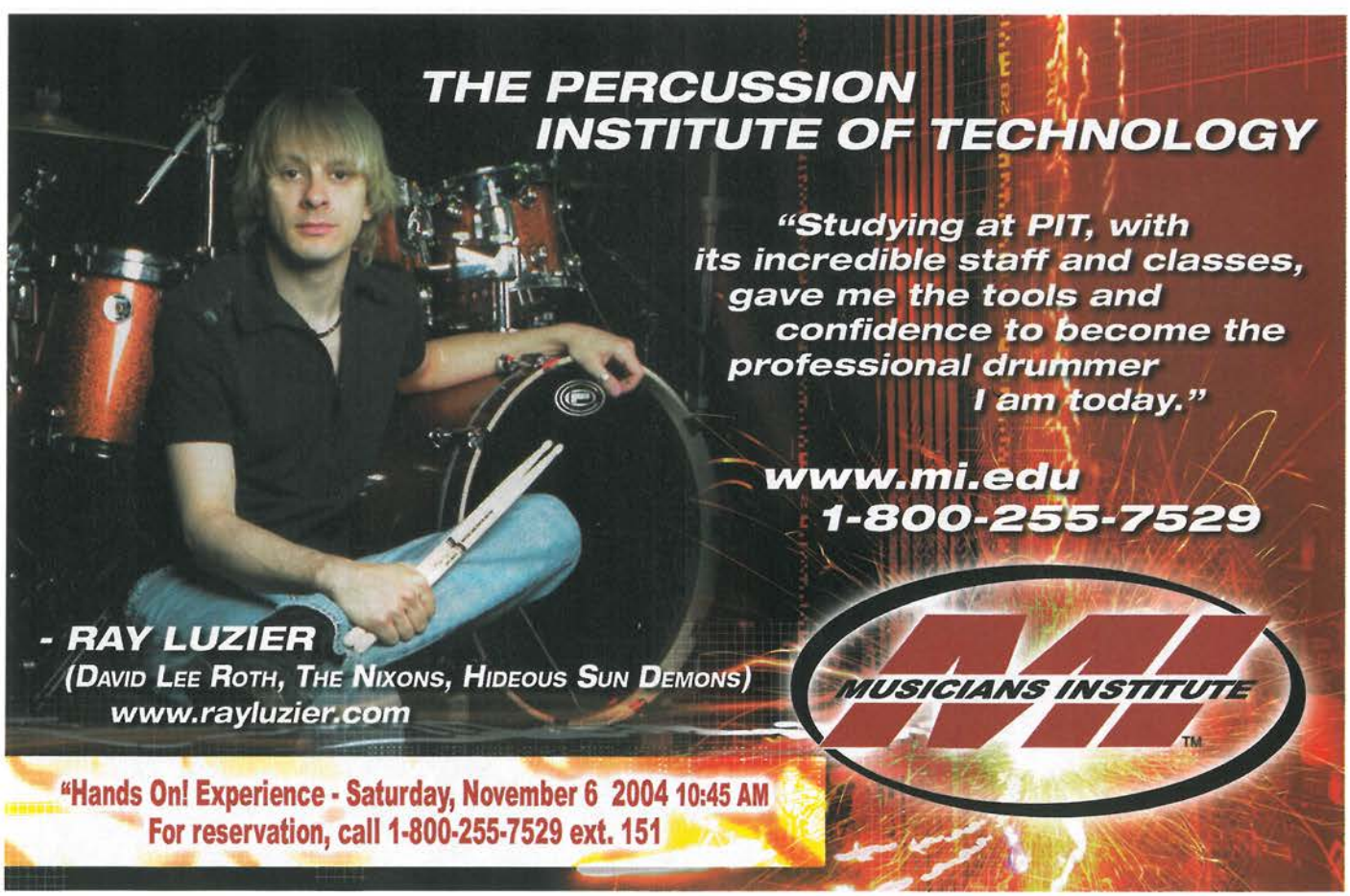
Patato Valdez Receives Latin Ace Award

Cuban percussion great Carlos "Patato" Valdez was honored by the members of ACE, the Associacion de Cronistas de Espectaculos de Nueva York (New York Hispanic Entertainment Journalist). The award was presented this past April 10 at the Latin ACE Awards 2004, held at New York City's Pennsylvania Hotel.

The award gala honored distinguished national and international Latino artists for their contributions and achievements in the diverse arts. "Patato" is one of Latin music's most colorful and beloved percussionists. He has devoted his life to enriching the lives of music lovers all over the world with his unique playing style and showmanship.



"It Was Twenty Years Ago Today...."
Ludwig Commemorates Beatles Connection

William F. Ludwig II (second from left) and his daughter, Brooke, presented a gold-plated snare drum to Ringo and The Beatles before the band made its first Chicago appearance in September, 1964.

Well, it was forty years, actually. In February of 1964 **The Beatles** made their first American appearance on television, on *The Ed Sullivan Show*. On September 5 of that year the group was scheduled to make their first-ever Chicago appearance at the Amphitheater. Police were scrambling to contain the 25,000 screaming fans who had hopelessly tied up downtown traffic. Meanwhile, **William F. Ludwig II**, president of **Ludwig Drums**, managed to get a few precious minutes to deliver a personal thank-you to **Ringo Starr** and the Fab Four. To say that he had a lot to thank them for is a major understatement. Ringo's TV appearance on a Ludwig drumset generated thousands of drumset orders for the company and set the garage-band boom of the '60s into motion. Mr. Ludwig accompanied his words of thanks with a special gold-plated Super-Sensitive snare drum.

Indy Quickies

Berklee College of Music held a drum circle recently to welcome its new president, **Roger H. Brown** (at right in photo). Brown,

who is Berklee's third president (and the first who is not a member of the Berk family), took office on June 1, 2004.

Tower Of Power drummer **David Garibaldi** and singer Larry Braggs were on hand this past Sunday, June 6 at the Frank H. Ogawa Plaza in front of Oakland City Hall to accept a lifetime achievement award from the California Music Association (CAMA) on behalf of the legendary R&B band. The award, formerly known as the Bammies (Bay Area Music Award) when *BAM* magazine was still in production, honors top recordings and lifetime achievements by California-born or -bred musicians. More information is available at www.californiamusicawards.com. Tower Of Power's site is www.bumpcity.com.

Gauger Percussion Inc., inventor and manufacturer of the RIMS suspension system, has begun action against Slingerland Drums for infringement and unauthorized use of its registered RIMS trademark. GPI states: "Persons visiting the Gibson USA Web site should be aware that Slingerland Drum Co., owned by Gibson USA, does not use the authentic RIMS mounting system as advertised on their site. Anyone who is considering the purchase of, or has purchased Slingerland drums in the past, should be aware that the suspension system offered with their drumsets is not the original RIMS system as advertised. GPI cannot attest to the functionality or quality of the counterfeit suspension mounts that may be on the drums that Slingerland customers received. While GPI would welcome the association of the legendary Slingerland name with our renowned mounting systems, we cannot allow the misuse, infringement, or association of our trademark with the possibility of inferior mounting systems not made by GPI."

Bill Miller has been named editor in chief of *Modern Drummer* magazine. He will be responsible for planning, organizing, and overseeing all aspects of editorial coverage in the magazine. A twenty-year veteran with *MD*, Bill's most recent position was that of editorial director. In that capacity he worked closely with the magazine's founder and former publisher, Ron Spagnardi.

Who's Using What

Longineu Parsons (Yellowcard), **Jonathan Mover** (session artist), **Mike Chiplin** (Lostprophets), **Marcus Randolph** (Robert Randolph & The Family Band), and **Ramy Antoun** (Seal) are new Vater drumstick endorsers.

Chris Adler (Lamb Of God), **Liberty DeVitto** (Billy Joel), **Paul Crosby** (Saliva), **Lil' Darrell Robinson** (Musiq), **Kevin Miller** (Fuel), **Eric Tribbett** (Floetry, Vivian Green), **Jerry Rowe** (Gretchen Wilson), and **Sam Aliano** (Gongzilla, Prototype) are now playing Mapex drums.

The latest signings at Yamaha Drums include **Steve Hass** (Manhattan Transfer), **Joe Abbatantuono** (Jessica Simpson), **Oliver Charles** (Ben Harper), and **Justin Foley** (Killswitch Engage).

Billy Mason (Tim McGraw) has signed on as an artist endorser with electronic percussion specialist Hart Dynamics.

New Pearl artists include **Adrian Erlandsson** (Cradle Of Filth) and **Richard Evensand** (Chimaira).

Eddie Tuduri, Lynn Higa, Vinnie Colaiuta, Dion Cornejo, Airto Moriera

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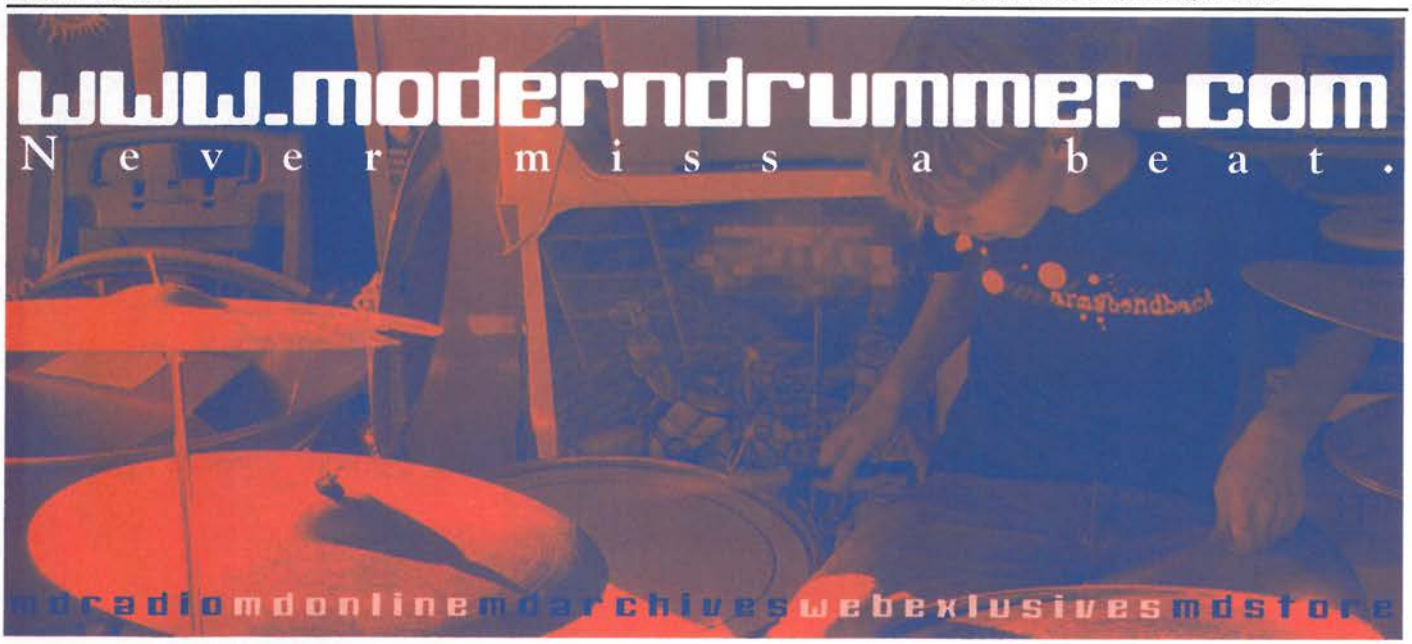

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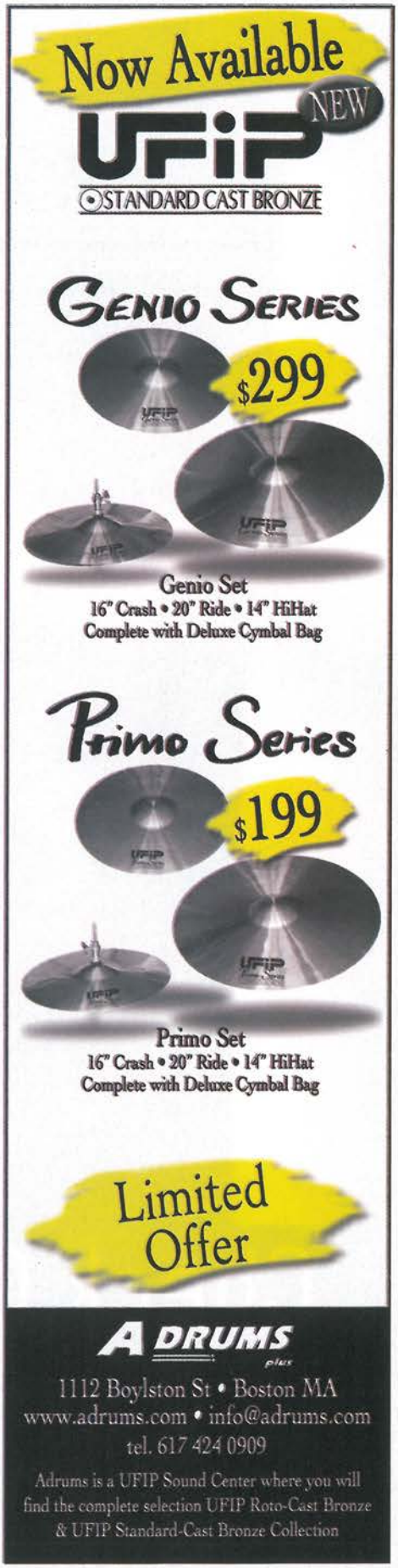

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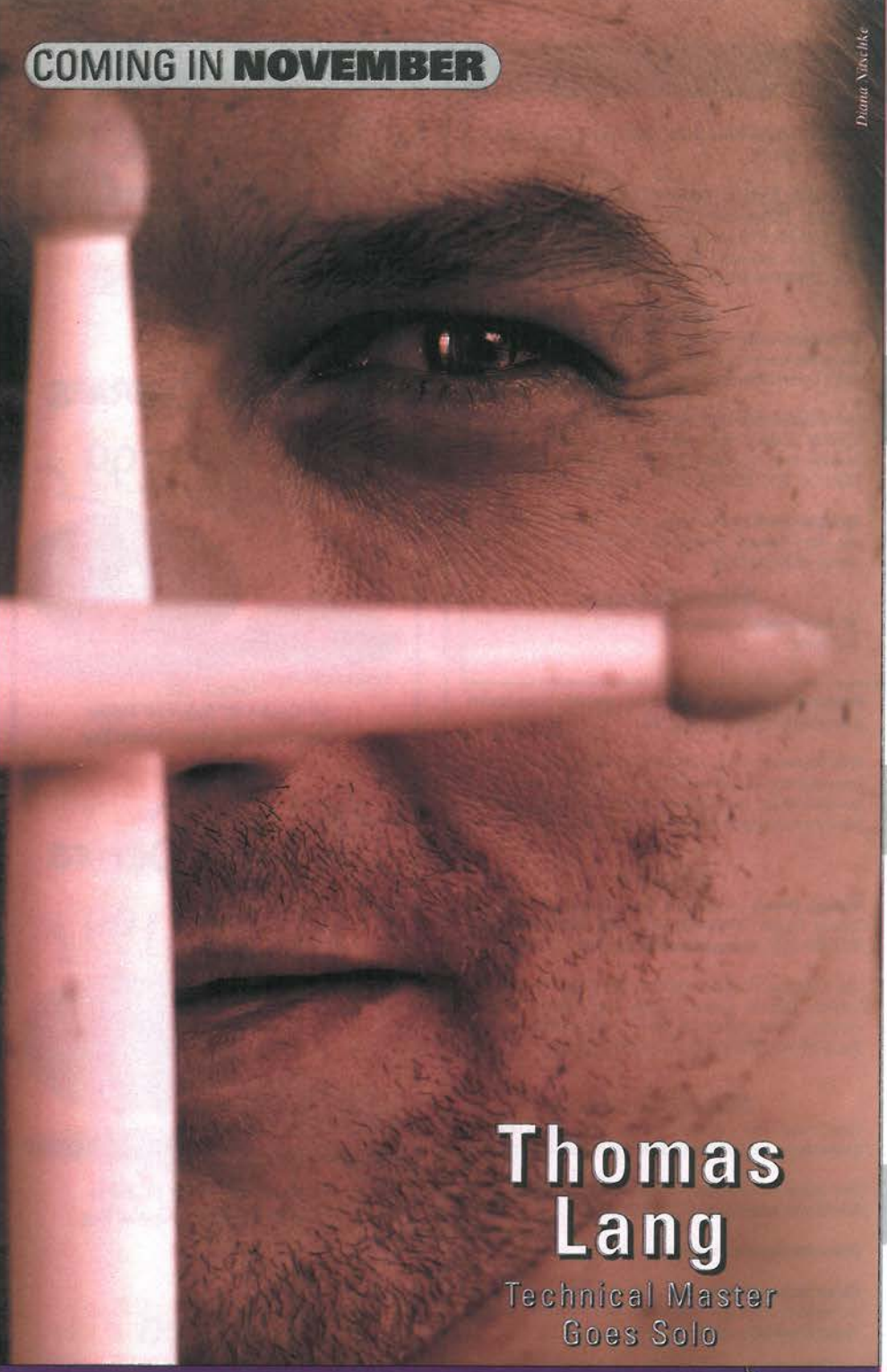

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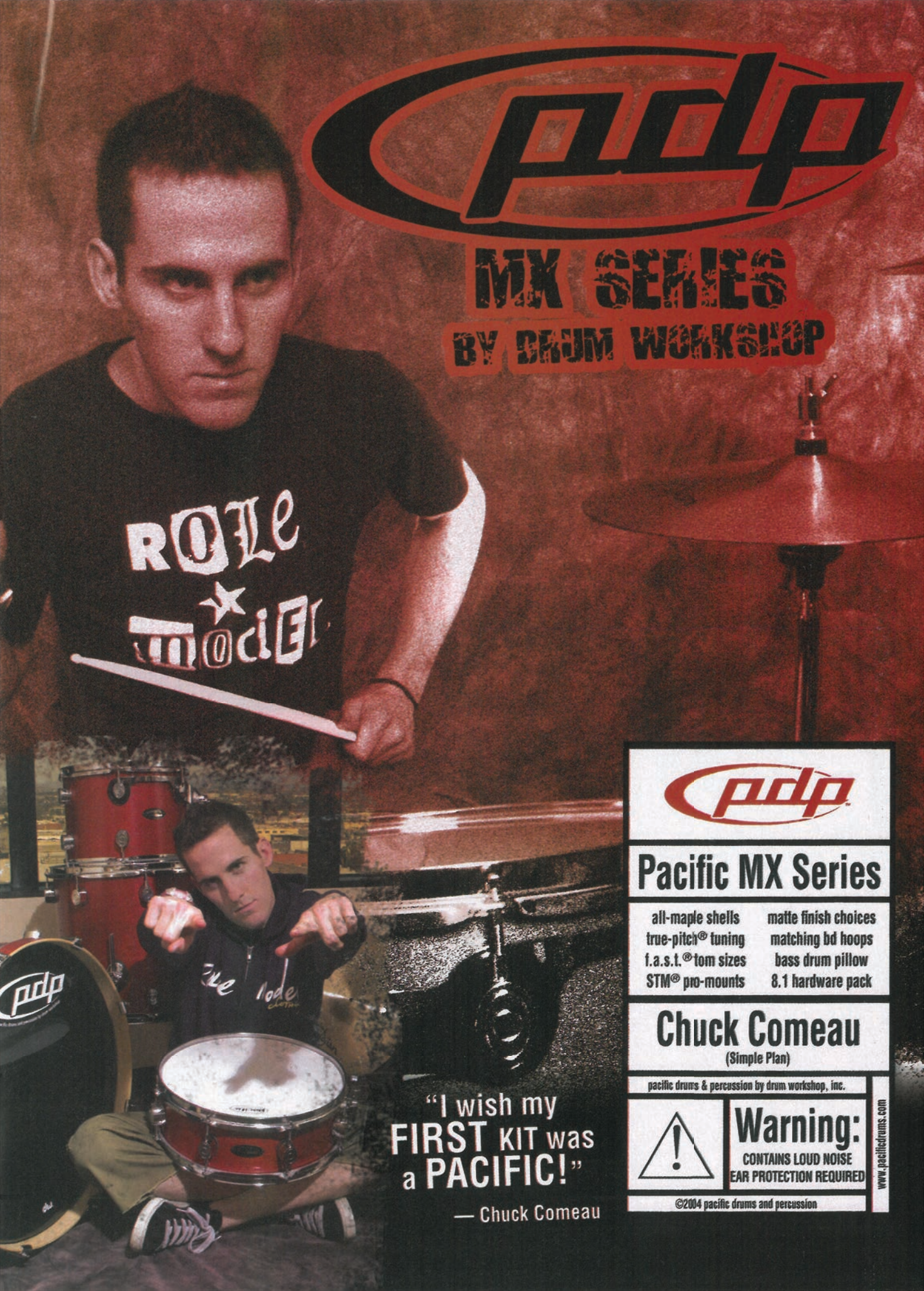
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